KNOWING THE MASTER THROUGH JOHN

An Interpretation in the Light of Modern Thought and Understanding

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By

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FOREWORD

THE Gospel of St. John is the greatest of all Christian writings. Nowhere else is there such an intimate presentation of the teachings of Jesus as is given by the "Beloved Disciple."

Hence it is more profoundly mystical in parts than any of the other Gospels. It is true that all may draw great comfort from it, that the least learned respond to the divine love which pervades it as quickly and warmly as do the most scholarly, and are equally moved to all the depths of their natures by its sublime pathos. But only a teacher of great learning, tireless research, utmost sincerity, and exceptional spirituality can interpret all of it in its fullness. No other should attempt it; few would even make the attempt.

To those who knew him well, among whom I was numbered as his publisher, the late Aaron Martin Crane was the one qualified to make this contribution to Christian knowledge and Christian faith. Few have been the lives that have so moved many, in all reverence, to think of the life of the Great Teacher.

Thus it was entirely natural that the ones who were privileged to be of Mr. Crane's Bible Class should especially treasure the lessons given to the Gospel of

John; that these lessons should be carefully preserved by stenographic notes; and that there should grow a compelling demand they be given to the world as a book.

With the teacher gone, it was a matter of great responsibility to present these studies in a way to do justice to the one who gave so richly of himself in preparation for their outgiving in spoken form. This labor of love has been performed by a devoted member of the Class, who has given to her work many months of conscientious painstaking, assisted when necessary by an able teacher of Greek, in order that as much as possible of Mr. Crane's scholarly helpfulness might be retained. Each of the thirty-five chapters of this book represents what was given at a session of the Class, and combined to make a harmonious interpretation of the life and precepts of "Him who spake as never man spake," drawn from the highest source, they go out in the hope that those who read may feel their lives made better by the awakening of mind, heart, and soul, even as did those who listened while Mr. Crane taught.

WARREN FENNO GREGORY.

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Knowing the Master Through John

I

A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE IN THE TEACHING OF JESUS

In the last chapter of Luke is recorded an account of the appearance of Jesus to his disciples after his crucifixion. The narrative sets forth the facts in the simplest possible form without attempting to emphasize the importance of the event. It concludes with the following declaration, which, coming at this time and under these circumstances, has peculiar significance:

"Then opened he their understanding (*mind*—R. V.), that they might understand the scriptures,

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

It has seemed to be the fate of every great teacher to be misunderstood. As we look back through the

years since the time of Jesus' teaching, it appears that he has not only not been understood, but that he has been greatly misunderstood. We remember that phrase of his, "But I say unto you which *hear,*" and also, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." It is the *hearer* whom Jesus wishes to reach, the one who hears and understands.

It has been said that the sayings of Jesus which we find in the Bible are merely detached statements uttered by him at various times, and that they are without connection, without relationship to each other. It has even been said that these utterances of his do not harmonize one with another. Every statement of truth *must* be related to every other statement, and each may be traced back to that truth which we shall find is the support on which the whole rests. This basic truth is the Absolute Truth, and every phase of this truth is always in harmony with every other phase of it.

Every great religious or moral movement must have somewhat of truth in it. While the untruth divides, *truth* is indivisible. So we must look closely, must judge cautiously, and while we reject the untruth be very careful that we do not reject the truth. If what Jesus said is indeed true, it must stand in close relationship with that underlying truth which is the Absolute Truth, and every statement which he uttered will

bear relation to every other statement, as well as be in harmony each with the other.

There is sound philosophy in Jesus' teachings. An underlying principle exists in all that he said, which, if we but look with open eyes and without prejudice, we shall see, and seeing, we shall understand. Indeed, in the very nature of things this must be so. The greatest fact that Jesus taught, the one of first importance, is the one which underlies all things, all truth, and to which all truth is related,—that everything refers back at last to God, the Supreme Being. And as we more clearly see and understand, we shall discern how close is the relationship between ourselves and this great First Cause, the Infinite Being, whom Jesus told us to call "Our Father."

Jesus taught in a most practical way an entirely new method of reform. Philosophers and psychologists of to-day tell us that *mind is first,* that mind action is the first action, and that without mind action there is no action of the physical body. And if we examine ourselves we shall find it to be true that our activities are all the result of mind actions, and that without mind action there is no bodily action whatever. What the psychologists tell us is therefore correct, that the bodily action, the action of the human being, is distinctly and definitely in accordance with the mental action which precedes it. In other words, the bodily action always

responds to the mental action. A certain kind of mental stimulation acts on the tear glands and we shed tears; a certain kind of mentality stimulates another kind of activity and we laugh. In a similar manner hate causes one kind of activity and love another. I lift my hand because I *think* to lift my hand; I move it to the right or left, all in accordance with my thinking.

These are but simple illustrations but we may go a little farther and observe the relation of this principle to morality itself. Every action which we perform is accomplished because we thought about it. The thief steals because he thinks about stealing; the liar lies because he thinks about lying; the murderer kills because he thinks about killing. If the thief stops thinking about stealing he cannot steal; if the liar stops thinking about lying he cannot lie; if the murderer stops thinking about killing he cannot kill. I may be so angry as to wish to kill the man I think is an enemy, but in the very heat of that anger, if I stop thinking about it, if I stop the angry thought, killing would be an impossibility for me. The thought must be in the mind first before the action can be performed. It needs no explanation to show the importance of this principle from the moral point of view.

There is an element in the constitution of man, in the way man is made, which makes the consciousness

of this principle an innate truth within himself as regards all moral living. What man ever contemplated any wrong act who did not first within himself hear the "still small voice" of conscience protesting, who did not first hear the divine prohibition "Thou shalt not"?

The recognition of this principle is evident throughout the whole of Jesus' teaching. Perhaps in no place does he proclaim it more strongly than in what he says concerning lust: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." [1]

John the Baptist when he was announcing the coming of Jesus, speaking metaphorically said, "And now the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." [2] This is a categorical statement directly in line with the principle we are discussing. The root of all action is *thinking*. Jesus therefore laid the axe at the root of the tree of adultery and destroyed it, that the tree no more might grow.

It is the same with regard to killing, for he says, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,

[1] Matt. v. 27, 28. [2] Matt. iii. 10.

Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment." Now anger is the root of murder; the angry thought has only to be cultivated, enlarged, to result in killing, and Jesus knowing this applies the axe directly to the root of the tree for he adds, "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment,"[1] thus referring to the *thought* which produces the outward action. He puts precisely the same penalty upon anger in the heart,—anger which has had no expression whatever,—that the law places upon killing, murder; while for anger which finds verbal expression, the penalty is even greater.[2] Thus we see that we are to *stop thinking* the thought which produces wrong results.

Again Jesus says, "Judge not."[3] We think that we have a right to judge, that we ought to condemn the man who has done wrong. But Jesus says, "Judge not,—condemn not." Condemnation is a mental condition; it is a mental action. There is a decided difference between *knowing* the error, and *condemnation* because of that error. We most certainly are *to know* the wrong which presents itself to us and to beware of it, but that does not necessitate condemnation of the wrong-doer, of the person committing the sin or

[1] Matt. v. 21, 22. Revised Version omits "without cause."
[2] Matt. v. 22.
[3] Matt. vii. 1.

mistake. We see the erroneous act of our friend and know that it is erroneous, yet this does not necessitate a change of heart towards him. It is the error that we are to let alone; the error thought that we are to put away.

So we may study any one of Jesus' precepts and we shall find them all in harmony with this principle which we are discussing. Take that great ethical precept, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."[1] This applies to *thoughts* as well as to actions and to thoughts first of all because wrong actions are the result of wrong thoughts. Without the wrong thought, the wrong action would not occur. What would be the condition if the whole world complied with this one precept? If we should all of us immediately stop thinking wrong thoughts, if all thoughts of evil were to be excluded at once from the mind, there would be left thoughts of truth only; heaven itself would be here *now*.

We find the same principle applies to forgiveness. When you wish to be forgiven, whether you are aware of it or not, your desire is that your friend shall put out of his thought, out of his consciousness, everything connected with the wrong which you have done. You wish him to put entirely away all recollection, all rec-

[1] Matt. vii. 12.

ognition of this error which you have committed. In other words, you wish to be left in exactly the same position, in his thought of you, that you would have been in had you not committed the mistake. Indeed this is the true meaning of the Greek word which in the New Testament is translated "forgive." It means simply "to put away; to give up; to be done with."

Then, too, we should remember that Jesus nowhere tells any one to hold back his forgiveness until forgiveness is asked. According to his teaching we are to forgive the moment we find anything to be forgiven. There is also another thought in this connection. You remember the question of Peter as to how many times he should forgive. As many as seven times? And the Master replied, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."[1] The extent of your forgiveness is to be complete and for all time.

Here we touch again a question of humanity. We say it takes two to quarrel, it takes two to be angry; then if two are angry, and if one resolutely and successfully puts the angry thought away,—out of mind,—the other must ultimately give it up also. Let us not forget this when we repeat that central petition of the prayer we call "Our Lord's Prayer," "Forgive us

[1] Matt. xviii. 21, 22.

our debts as we forgive our debtors," meaning, forgive us what we owe to others as we have forgiven what others owe to us. This may sound prosaic and commonplace, but it is something that every one of us ought to practise if we are true to ourselves.

But the teaching of Jesus does not stop with mere negative injunctions. We are not merely to refrain from condemnation, not merely to put away,—forgive, —the wrong. Jesus adds to this the positive behest to *love* our enemies, for he says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies." Men from that day to this have said, "I cannot love my enemy." They have said this because they did not recognize their own peculiarities, did not know their own powers or capabilities. It is true that the human mind is so constituted that it cannot do two opposite things at the same time; it cannot love and hate at one and the same time. Love and hate are diametrically opposed to each other, and we cannot love until we get hate out of the mind.

It is well known that we can train ourselves to stop thinking any one thought and think another in its place.[1] And if we can exclude one wrong thought, that is proof that we may exclude all wrong thoughts.

[1] For a fuller discussion of this subject, see *Right and Wrong Thinking and Their Results,* by the same author.

It is but a question of training ourselves. It is not that we are to call wrong right, or black white; we are not to change our opinion regarding the error we see in the man, we are simply to change our own mental attitude towards the man and stop hating him. And when we have stopped hating our enemy, then we are in the condition to begin loving him. In like simple manner we can go on until we have learned to love even our worst enemy; he will then no longer be an enemy.

Therefore Jesus says, "Love your enemies, . . . That ye may be[1] the children of your Father which is in heaven." From this he goes on to that final and supreme declaration, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,"[2] or, as rendered in the Revised Version, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

We have our great example in Jesus himself who showed such divine love for enemies. As the records indicate, it was within a few moments after Judas had left the room to betray him, that Jesus, knowing for

[1] There is no contradiction in Jesus' meaning at this place. When he says, "That ye *may be* children of your Father" he means that you *may manifest yourselves as such.* We *are* the children of our Father *now,* but if we love our enemies, or when we love our enemies, we shall *manifest* that fact. In loving our enemies, we shall the more truly express our relationship to the Father.

[2] Matt. v. 43–48.

what purpose he had gone, yet uttered these well-remembered words, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." [1] Judas had gone without any interference from the Master who might have stopped him with a look. But had he not said "Resist not evil"? And was he not always obedient to his own precepts? Jesus loved Judas at that moment, though all the Christian world has execrated him from that day to this.

A little while afterwards Jesus told his disciples *how* he had loved them: "As the Father hath loved me, *so* have I loved you." [2] In such love as this there can be no wrong thinking, no discordant thinking of any kind whatsoever. Here we reach the heights of absolute truth, where is only perfection.

Therefore, if we stop all discordant thoughts, all wrong or erroneous thoughts, we have reached the point where we shall begin to manifest perfection. And having reached the condition where every error has been put from the mind, we are then just entering in at the door, we are just passing over the threshold into that place where we shall perceive the truth of God's being, the truth of God's creation, in all its infinite vastness. Here there are no restrictions, no prohibitions, but perfect, absolute freedom, and here

[1] John xiii. 34. [2] John xv. 9.

we shall at last realize the truth regarding ourselves and our relation to Him. This is the simple, plain road by which we may approach perfection, and the farther we travel on this road now, the less distance we shall have to go by and by; each step is a step gained; each step is a step taken forever.

We are all striving for better things; every one is seeking for that unattained good which he sees just before him, and when each has accomplished that, there appears before him a good not before seen. And so he goes onward from one good to another. And no man nor child of God will ever be content until he has reached the great good of absolute perfection. This is because we *are* children of God, and have in our constitution that which necessitates this growth towards perfection.

Thus it was peculiarly fitting that Jesus should say as quoted at the beginning of this chapter: "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." "Repentance" means simply "a change of mind"; and "remission" means "a putting away." So it might read: "A change of mind, unto the putting away of all error, all sin, should be preached in his name."

This is the scientific principle which underlies Jesus' teaching, and the glory of it is that we may each of us,

by his help and through the recognition of the truth, go forward until we ourselves have become perfected even as he admonished us. This is within the scope and power of every one.

II

CREATION
(John I. 1–5)

THE most sublime writings in all literature are to be found in the Bible, and there is nothing there that is more sublime, more pregnant with meaning, or of deeper interest than the opening verses of the Book of John. They contain a complete philosophy touching all life, from God to the humblest manifestation.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
"The same was in the beginning with God.
"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.
"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.
"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

These passages are among the most difficult of translation of any in the New Testament. Hebrew scholars tell us that the phrase, "In the beginning," which opens the Book of John, is full of significance to the Jewish mind, being fraught with greater mean-

ing than we generally attribute to the expression. The translation so far as words are concerned is accurate, yet it is difficult to express clearly the meaning intended to be conveyed by the original. It is the meaning which the Hebrews attached to the phrase that we desire to get at. The expression does not refer in itself specifically to time.[1] It is a phrase by which the Hebrews undertook to designate that mysterious, fleeting, and yet ever stable quality, without which a thing would not be. In other words, it refers to the centre of things, the substance of things. So here in this instance it means just that and, instead of being merely an introductory phrase, it relates to the whole of the sentence. Thus you see we have a meaning here of greater importance than at first appears, not merely, First there was the Word or Logos, but rather, Underlying everything was the Word or Logos.

"In the beginning was the Logos." The Greek word "Logos" which is translated "Word" in our Bible, is absolutely untranslatable into English if we wish to obtain its full meaning. "Logos" is generally understood to mean the spoken or written word, and that translation is accurate so far as it goes, but it is incomplete. The word "Logos" includes in its meaning the thought in the mind before it found expression,

[1] The phrase "In the beginning" is sometimes translated "In the original or originally"; or "In the essential,—essentially."

and also the expression of that thought in every form in which it may be made.

But that is not all, for, in the vastness of its meaning, the word "Logos" goes even behind the thought and includes the mind itself. Therefore it includes within its meaning, the mind, the thought, and the expression of that thought. Thus you see it is impossible properly to translate this word into English. Our best scholars regret that the translation was ever attempted and wish that it had been brought over into the English unchanged.

"In the beginning was the Logos." In the beginning was *Mind; mind action,* or thinking; *thought,* the result of mind action; and the *expression* of that thought in the spoken or written word, or in any form whatsoever. Or, expressed in a different form, we might say: In the essential of things was Mind and its action and results and consequences of all kinds. The immensity of the idea is overwhelming; it is beyond our comprehension.

"And the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God." The Logos was God, the Infinite Mind, without which not anything is. We say sometimes that "God is Mind," but there is nowhere in the English language or in any language, a more wonderful form of expressing this idea in its fullness than is found in

this first verse of the Gospel of John. It touches the very pinnacle of sublimity.

This Infinite Mind is infinite in all its particulars, pervading all that you can imagine of infinite space, infinite existence, and it stands as the unchangeable foundation upon which all science is built. It *was,* and *is,* and ever *will be,* because it is infinite. Therefore, in the beginning was God, the Essential; He who is the All-Present, the Everywhere-Present, and who in His infinity includes all that is. With Him, in Him, is contained all that mind ever expressed, all that mind ever conceived, all that mind ever will conceive, or express. If the idea seems beyond our power to grasp, let us remember that it is impossible for us to comprehend in its fullness this Infinite Mind, this Infinite Being, which is God.

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." The word that is translated "were made" occurs many times in the New Testament and has fifty different renderings, according to the places where it is found. For instance, in the words of Jesus already referred to: "Love your enemies, . . . that ye *may be* the children of your Father which is in heaven." The word that is translated "may be" is from the *same* Greek word as "is made" and "was made," and also "were made" in the place we are

here considering, that is, they are but different forms of the same word. "Were made" as used in the original Greek means simply, "to be born, to become, to come into being." The word "made" as used in this passage is not used with the meaning generally attributed to it,—that of something physical or material made with the hands. But it is used in a spiritual sense and with the meaning of,—"to create, to produce, to cause to be"; or as one dictionary has it, —"to be the author of; to cause to exist; to call into being or distinct existence."

"All things were made by Him," that is, were expressed or manifested by Him and through Him. All things were made by God, or, were expressed into being out of Himself. Here is the source of *all* existence; everything that exists is not only in God but from Him. Thus all things were in the Infinite Mind and were disclosed or revealed, were expressed[1] or made manifest[1] by that Mind, the Logos, God.[2]

"And without Him was not any thing made that was made." A difficulty in translation occurs in this sentence. The Greek manuscripts from which our New Testament was translated were written after the man-

[1] The expression "made manifest" means, "to make known, to reveal, to disclose that which is unseen." The Standard Dictionary gives as one meaning of "express,"—"to make or manifest the image or likeness of."

[2] *A Search After Ultimate Truth,* Chapters XXXVIII and XXXIX, "Creation."

ner of the Greeks at that time, and they used no punctuation marks and no spaces between the words, the letters being set down in lines across the page.[1] So it is not to be wondered at that sometimes the entire meaning was not clearly or even exactly rendered. The complete quotation from the marginal rendering in the Revised Version is as follows:

"All things were made by Him (or through Him); and without Him was not any thing made. That which hath been made was life in Him; and the life was the light of men."

"That which hath been made was life in God"; was life in the Eternal and Infinite Logos. This is in exact harmony, you see, with the first words of the declaration, that the Logos,—which is the Infinite Mind or God,—contained within itself, all mind and all mind action. There was in all infinity, no other substance but this Infinite Mind, this Infinite Life, which is God. Thus we see that all existing creation

[1] For example, in the original Greek the word order for this passage is as follows: "and without Him was made nothing which hath been made in Him life was." In the Authorized or King James Version these words have been divided into two sentences, the first one ending with the second "made," leaving the second sentence as our familiar, "In Him was life." In the Revised Version the division into sentences is made after the word "nothing," and,—"which hath been made in Him life was," is rendered, "That which hath been made was life in Him."

was made out of God's own life. Every living being is of that Infinite Life. Therefore *your* life is of the substance of His life; your origin, the origin of each individual, is in God. Jesus recognized this when he told us to call God "*Father.*" God *is* our Father, and when we repeat the wonderful words of "Our Lord's Prayer," we can say with absolute truthfulness, "*Our* Father."

But He is even more than our Father. Closer than any possible human relationship is the relationship which you and I, every one of us, bear to God. All things were created by Him, and without Him was not anything created. That which hath been brought into being by Him was out of the Infinite, Divine Life. And because of this, our lives are indeed sacred and divine, and not only that, but the life which God has given us is eternal.

"And the life was the light of men." This life is the light that shines in and through you; it is *your* life, your very existence. Therefore when troubles assail, when grief afflicts, when the trials and tribulations of the world assault, step into the silence of your inner self, which is your *real* self, and recognize that, as enduring as God Himself, is your own life, your own individuality, which is of Him and is not touched by external appearances.

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." [1]

This light of which John is speaking is the light of the Infinite Mind and it shines *everywhere.* It shines in the darkness of the world of materiality but that world of materiality knows not of it. What is darkness? Darkness in the physical world is merely the absence of light; that is all. According to the testimony of our material senses we think we feel and recognize darkness as a reality with the same kind of recognition we give to light, but darkness is in itself absolutely nothing, merely the *absence* of light. Through all the ages of the world men have set darkness in opposition to light but light *is the reality,* and the light of you, the light of your intelligence, the light of your mind, is that which constitutes *you.*

We have here the answer to the great question that is asked by all humanity; the question of the child, and of the old man; the question that is asked by every one all the way along. "Whence am I?" "Whence did I come?" I am from God, and that which within me

[1] The Revised Version gives the word "apprehended" rather than "comprehended," and the Revised Version, Margin gives the word "overcame." We might say, "The darkness understood or recognized it not." Or, "The darkness did not overcome the light, it did not prevail." The same Greek word in John xii. 35 Revised Version, is there translated, "that darkness *overtake* you not." The word in the original really means "seize" like our "grasp."

is the true, the real, and the enduring, is of God's own life, and I therefore, in the essential of myself, am divine. This is our grand origin and each individual may thus truthfully say of himself, " I am from God."

These wonderful declarations found at the beginning of John's Gospel refer to something which has always existed and which Jesus came to reveal to us more perfectly and more clearly than we had ever before perceived. He showed the way by which every one might come into a fuller recognition of the true spiritual being of himself.

III

THE LIGHT THAT LIGHTETH EVERY MAN
(John I. 6–14)

The principal thought discussed in the previous chapter was,—"All things were made by Him, God, the Logos." We should remember that the personal pronoun as used in these verses in the first part of the Book of John refers distinctly to the Word, the Logos, the Infinite Mind or God. Let us also remember that the words "were made" are not used in the sense of *making* as we generally understand that word, but rather in the sense of manifestation or expression. All things were expressed or revealed by the Infinite Mind, as you, for instance, express to another the thought which is in your mind. All things were expressed by Him; and without Him was not anything made, manifested, or expressed. That which hath been made, that which hath been expressed, or made manifest, was life in Him and is an expression of that life, an expression of the Infinite Mind,—as your thought which you express to another is an expression of your own mind. And in a similar manner we might say that as your thought is an indivisible and inseparable part of your mind, so are all these expressions which God

has made manifest, inseparable and indivisible parts of His own Mind, of His own Life.

Life and Mind are here used interchangeably as we speak of any of the essentials of God. Whether we speak of Him as Mind or Life, as Truth or Love, or by whatever characteristic we may wish to designate Him, we are but referring to the different conceptions which we may have of the one Infinite Life or Mind which is God.[1] This Life is the light of men. It is *your* light; and your intelligence, your perception of truth, is from that inner life of your own being which is of God's Life.

The next verse in order is a sort of parenthetical statement introducing John, the Baptist.

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

"The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

"He (John) was not that Light (the Logos, or God), but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man[2] that cometh into the world."

All things were made by Him, the Logos, our Father, and the light of His truth lighteth every man

[1] And this idea may be enlarged to include every essential or characteristic which we may attribute to God. See "A Search After Ultimate Truth," Part Three.

[2] The Greek word here translated "man" is the generic word, meaning human being,—man, woman or child.

that cometh into the world. It is the light of every human being, the essential of each intelligence. Jesus, in complete harmony with this, gave us his ethical rule whereby we may bring the kingdom of heaven, which is the kingdom of God, right here on earth now if we will, for he said, "As ye would (as *ye* would) that men should do to you, do *ye* also to them likewise." [1] He showed us the lofty standard for all human action, and the issue is left, not to the Bible, nor to any written law, not to any outside authority, not even to the Father Himself, but to the light of truth which shines in every man. It is not to be wondered at if we stand in awe of this sublime fact regarding ourselves, but once we really comprehend the idea in its fullness we shall find that no task is really too great for us.

This Infinite Light is the "true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It shines throughout all existence. It can never go out for it is eternal,—the Everlasting Light. It shines even in the darkness, but the darkness perceiving it not, or understanding it not, denies it, or is in opposition to it, and just in proportion to our realization of this, will the darkness of which we seem so conscious be overcome.

"He (the true Light, or God) was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew (recognized) Him not.

[1] Luke vi. 31.

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

As we look back over the history of the world and upon conditions as they exist to-day, how much does the world of materiality recognize God? How much does it recognize Him as the Infinite Light, the One Infinite Mind?

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become[1] the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

"But as many as received Him," that is, as many as received or recognized the Light (and it is only light that recognizes light); as many as perceived the truth, to them gave He the power to manifest themselves as the sons of God. The Greek word is not "sons" at this place, and the passage in the Revised Version reads, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become *children* of God."

Think of it! It is to *you,* in so far as you each accept, recognize, or perceive this truth of the light which shines within you, that the ability is given by which you may become a child of God, or may manifest yourself as such. For it means, "As many as

[1] Here again we have in the expression "*to become,*" the same verb which in translation has so many different renderings. See a parallel illustration in the use of the verb "*may be*" in Matt. v. 45.

received Him, to them gave He power " to show that they *are* the sons of God; the children of God. We are children of the Highest *now,* and we have only to manifest that fact and to let the light shine.

We have been taught to look to Jesus as peculiarly the Son of God, and he was the Son of God, manifesting that relationship to a greater degree than any other being, but simply because he let his light shine, and did not hide it when there was opportunity after opportunity for its hiding. Look at the temptation that came to him in the wilderness when he might have hid his light and have become a ruler of the material world, and at those other occasions where he was tempted to become an earthly king, and see how he escaped from the temptation. Look, too, at that last great temptation, a few days after his entrance into Jerusalem. The people wished to make him king, and because he would not, but departed from them, they lost faith in him and rejected him, and later, crucified the man, Jesus. But his light did constantly shine, and it continued to shine brighter and still brighter as in the resurrection, and it shines throughout the world to-day.

Jesus was the Son of God, but we also are sons of God, and through the perception of this truth regarding ourselves, we too may manifest this sonship in the same fullness that he did. And thus his words

will be fulfilled, for he said, "The works that I do shall ye do also, and greater than these shall ye do." We shall ultimately manifest this truth in its perfection and show forth our relationship to God for we are indeed children of the One, Infinite, Divine Father. We are made in His image and likeness.[1]

"Even to them that believe on His name." The word "name" had an especial significance to the Hebrew mind, one that is generally unrecognized by us, as we interpret its meaning. In reading the early Hebrew books of the Bible, we find that the people in those days were named for some characteristic peculiar to each one, something that distinguished them from others. So in this instance and wherever Jesus uses the phrase, "in His name" or "on His name," he doubtless intended to convey a deeper meaning than we generally attribute to it. Therefore, as I see it, to "believe on His name" is to believe in Him not only as God as we ordinarily use that word, but it is to believe in Him with a fuller comprehension of His characteristics than we have heretofore possessed. We are to believe in Him as the Essential of all Life, of all Power and of all Truth. We are to believe in Him as the Logos, the Infinite Mind, the Light that lights the entire world.

[1] Genesis i. 26, 27.

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

"Which were born of God." See how all these statements unite in one harmonious whole. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made." He is the Father, and these are born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God.* And you can see how this also, like all that goes before, includes every individual child of God.

"And the Word (Logos) was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) [1] full of grace and truth."

"And the Word *was made* flesh." Spirit made materiality? *"Impossible,"* you say! We can, however, without departing too much from the original Greek text, interpret this as meaning: The Word *took on* the semblance or garment of flesh in the sense that it appeared or was made manifest in a material form, and then see how it reads: "And the Word (Logos) was manifested in or through the flesh, (as the light shines through the darkness) and dwelt among us." Here

[1] In the Revised Version, Margin, this is rendered, "As of *an* only begotten from *a* father."

the writer is speaking of Jesus the Christ, and if we again quote the passage transposing some of the lines, the meaning will be identical, yet we may add to the beauty and strength of our interpretation. Thus: "And the Word or Logos was manifested in or through the flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

When I contemplate the character, the teaching, and the work of Jesus the Christ, I am not amazed that those early Christians thought that he was God. I can even understand how with their impression of him, they should conceive the idea that Jesus was indeed God. But *he* never said he was, and John here does not say he was. He does say that the Word was made manifest in the flesh, and that manifestation dwelt among us, and "we beheld his glory, the glory as of an only begotten." The glory as of a son who receives from the Father all that the Father has to give. So did this Light or Infinite Mind, this Logos, shine through Jesus, and from the beginning to the end of his career this Light did shine, and mankind beheld its glory.

Here we reach the end of the Logos story. It is wonderful in its significance, wonderful in its completeness. It includes the whole universe and God Himself. And it is directed specifically to *the one*

who hears, to *the one who understands;* to the one who, through perception of the truth regarding this Light, recognizes that he has received the ability to become a child of God. Yet not to *become* a child of God,—he *is* that already, but to manifest himself as such; in other words, to live such a life that by his living he will *prove* his sonship to God. And just in proportion to this recognition will be the strength of the light that shall shine from your being, radiating from you out into the world, helping, blessing, everywhere that it shines, even though you yourself may be unconscious of it and of its far-reaching effects.

We remember that Jesus said, "*Let* your light shine."[1] It is not that you are to place this light before the world, it is not that you are to boast of it, and declare its superiority,—nothing of the kind. It is simply that you without effort, but perceiving this innermost truth of your being, shall *let* it shine; not hindering it, not helping it, but *letting* it shine. "That men may see your good works," Jesus continues, "and glorify," no, not *you,* but "your Father which is in heaven." Let that light which is within yourself shine so that it may be recognized by the light which is within every other human being, for, as before stated, only light recognizes light. It is not recognized by darkness. You do not need to *make* it shine, it shines

[1] Matt. v. 16.

of itself; you do not need even to make an effort towards it, it comes of itself, for its nature is to shine.

Here, you see, is an explanation of the words of Jesus, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." [1] For to the extent of the recognition of this light which is within you, and of the simple allowing of it to shine, without effort on your part, by just so much will the world be enlightened and the trials and tribulations of mankind be lifted, and by just so much will peace and rest come to the weary and heavy laden.

[1] Matt. xi. 28.

IV

THE INTRODUCTION OF JESUS BY JOHN THE BAPTIST

(John I. 15–36)

In the wonderful story that John the Baptist has told us, we find a philosophy that sustains completely the statement which Jesus later made, that God is our Father and that we are His children. And this blessed relationship is closer than any earthly relationship can possibly be. We also find that it is indeed true that the life of each one of us is of God's own life, that each being has within himself a spark of the Divine Life; and though we do not manifest it as Jesus manifested it, yet it is for us to do so, even as he did.

We have now come in our study of this Gospel to the place where Jesus the Christ is distinctly and clearly referred to. In the closing declaration of the fourteenth verse, we read that he manifested in the flesh the glory, the great glory as of the only begotten of the Father. The narrative then goes on to say:

"John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me."

Jesus was first; he was before John the Baptist, because he was the first to manifest through the flesh, the absolute truth and life of God; that life which was and is the light of the world, lighting every man that cometh into the world. This is the same light that shines in *you,* and that enables you and me to recognize the light which shines through Jesus the Christ. This same light was in the world in the beginning, and is in the world now, if we but have the wisdom to open our eyes, and to see and understand, and to let it shine in and through ourselves. And so John continues to speak of Jesus:

"And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace."

We all *have* received of the fullness of the truth which shone through Jesus. We may not know this or recognize it, we may even deny it, but the fact remains. As John said at the beginning of this Gospel, "All things were made by God; and in Him was life, and that life was the light of men." John is right in his statement, and we are wrong in our standard of ourselves when we say that we cannot do as Jesus did and as Jesus himself told us we could do. God has not given opportunity to one, and withheld from another. The opportunity is ours, is for each one of us, if we will but recognize this truth, and have confidence

not only in ourselves as we see ourselves, but confidence in the light of that truth that lighteth all beings without respect of persons. So many, by their distrust of themselves, refrain from doing the work they ought to do, from following the life they ought to lead, from manifesting themselves as they really are, when they should look within and see the light that is there, and let that light shine.

"And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." Or, as some translators understand it, "grace upon grace, more and more of grace." Let us look for a moment at this word "grace." The word itself means kindliness, good-will, favor, or benefaction. A kindness such as that which one bestows upon another who perhaps has not deserved it. One dictionary expresses its meaning thus: "Any excellence or spiritual gift or attainment; the divine influence acting within the heart." With this definition of grace in mind, look at the life of Jesus, and see how full of grace he was.

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Think of the contrast, the great contrast, between the law as taught by Moses, exacting, rigid, prohibitory; and the wonderful loving-kindness, full of grace and truth, in the teaching of Jesus. The old law which

taught "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" was about to disappear. It was the law of vengeance and retaliation, of returning evil for evil, but it was doomed, for now comes the law of truth, which is the law of kindness and of love, the law of the Golden Rule, as taught by Jesus. In the usual meaning of the word Jesus did not teach us "laws," for laws are man-made rules of action, but he taught us the principles of truth, which are God-made, and particularly did he teach the principle of absolute freedom which each person owes to every other person.

The statements of truth as found in the Bible are remarkable indeed, when we realize that nineteen hundred years and more have passed since then and still we do not know this truth in its fullness. Aye, and nineteen hundred years more will come and go and we shall not even then have comprehended the fullness of this divine grace and truth. As far as the east is from the west we may search and shall not discover the boundaries of God's grace, for it is infinite. It will be as Paul says, the going on from glory to glory, through all eternity. Who can measure the love of God, who can fathom even in imagination its height or depth, its breadth?

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he

hath declared Him" (hath depicted or proclaimed Him).

"No man hath seen God at any time." This is an indisputable fact, if we understand the word "man" here to mean mortal man, the external man of earth, because the earthly man cannot perceive Him. There is not one thing of God, not one single characteristic or attribute of His or of His relationship to us, that the *sense*-man knows anything about. Our senses are absolutely silent with regard to all that pertains to God.

Men had had dim visions, as we have them now, but it remained for the Christ to declare or proclaim God, the Father, in His true relationship to us. Throughout the Old Testament, the Lord God is a god of wrath, of vengeance, of jealousy; characteristics which are noticeable for their absence in the teaching of Jesus, for he teaches of the loving Father only. God, "*the Father*" of the four Gospels, stands out in startling contrast to the God of the prophets, just as their laws stand in startling contrast to the grace and truth which Jesus made manifest to us.

The expression, "only begotten Son," has given rise to many differences of opinion and puzzling questions. If Jesus is the *only* son, how, one may ask, can we all be sons of God? John is the only writer who uses

this expression with reference to Jesus. In John iii. 16, 18 it is uncertain whether these are the words of Jesus himself or whether John is merely adding to Jesus' words an explanation of his own.

In Luke vii. 12, "the only son of his mother"; viii. 42, "an only daughter"; ix. 38, "mine only child," the Greek word translated "only" is the same word here under discussion and here rendered "only begotten." In these instances as well as others, the word is used to emphasize the fact that the *only* child is one especially beloved.

In Hebrews xi. 17, we find the same expression, "only begotten son," referring to Isaac, yet in the Septuagint the Greek word corresponding to "only," ("thine only son Isaac"—Gen. xxii. 2, 12, 16) is not the same word used in Hebrews at all, but another, meaning simply "*beloved.*" Just as the Greek word for "beloved" is often used in the sense of "only," the word translated "only," or "only begotten," sometimes loses its literal force and has the meaning of "unique," "chief," "beloved." John himself, who refers to Jesus as the "only begotten Son," declares: "*Whosoever* believeth that Jesus is the Christ is *begotten of God*" (1 John v. 1, R. V.). So too, the expression, "first-born," cannot always be taken literally. In Colossians i. 15, Jesus is spoken of as "the first-born of every creature." Whatever else the expression "only

begotten" may mean, it emphasizes the remarkable prominence in which Jesus the Christ was held by John, the writer of this Gospel. The only begotten Son was supposed to contain within himself the qualities of the Father.

In the present instance there is a difficulty in the text. According to the oldest manuscripts we read: "No one has ever seen God. The only begotten *God,* which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him"; while the marginal reading of the Revised Version is, "Many very ancient authorities read *God only begotten.*" The term "only begotten God" means the Son. If this is the correct reading, it merely shows that John wishes to emphasize the unity of the Christ with the Father by calling him God instead of Son. (This was Chrysostom's view.)

John the Baptist was making a great stir in Judea at this time. He had appeared before the people entirely by himself, independent of those in authority. He appealed to no authority for right to preach and baptize but prepared the way for the Great Teacher, who was to baptize with the Holy Spirit. The authorities wishing to know who he was, sent their priests to him asking, "Who art thou?" John replied that he was not the Christ, neither Elijah, nor any of those prophets. He said:

"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord."

"*The voice!*" And that voice to-day still speaks in the hearts of human beings asking them to receive the words of the Great Master.

"And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias (Elijah—R. V.), neither that prophet?

"John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

"He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."

Great as was John the Baptist, in his personal humility he felt he was not worthy to perform the most menial act of servitude. We, like John the Baptist, recognize the great difference between ourselves and Jesus. Yet there burns within each being, the light that is of the same light that lighteth the Christ, as Jesus himself declared. That light is within you, therefore let it be manifest even as Jesus did.

"These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world."

He now makes the personal introduction, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the

world." The word "lamb" was used here metaphorically, perhaps with the idea of a sacrificial lamb, but more probably to set forth the characteristics of Jesus the Christ. What are the characteristics of the lamb? Gentleness, harmlessness, innocence, grace, an entire lack of any antagonistic tendencies; no combativeness, no contention, complete non-resistance. This idea of the lamb is a symbol of the teaching in the Sermon on the Mount;—Resist not evil; love your enemies; love one another, even as I have loved you. "The Lamb of God"; without offense, so completely without antagonism, so completely without a shadow of destructiveness! This "Lamb" taketh away the error of the whole world, taketh away the sins and mistakes of all humanity, because, when the teaching of Jesus is followed in its entirety, all error without exception will disappear.

First of all, Jesus would have murder destroyed, by putting every vestige of anger out of the heart, and this so entirely that one would not even recognize anger when it existed in another. And he would have no more adultery, for the thought of lust is to be put completely out of the mind, as completely as the hand would be cut off, or the eye plucked out and cast away. Thus would he destroy adultery, for the thought which would lead to it would be totally excluded from the mind and thus have no existence whatsoever. And

again, he would have no resistance of evil, because he said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil."[1] Much has been said even by Christians to show that in this question of the non-resistance of evil, Jesus was wrong. But it is not by resisting that evil disappears. Opposed by resistance, it continues to show itself and to thrive. By the avoidance of evil, as in the avoidance of the angry thought, or the lustful thought, it disappears. Then there is that wonderful declaration of his, the one which is the culmination of all his sayings in opposition to the old law: "Love your enemies." When men love their enemies, every error that has ever been committed in the whole world, will disappear as the mist on the mountainside disappears before the rising sun. These are but a few illustrations of the remarkable teaching of Jesus. Through adherence to this teaching,—literally and exactly—is reached the result proclaimed by John the Baptist: the disappearance of evil from the earth. And so it is that this Lamb "taketh away the sin of the world." John goes on to say:

"This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

"And I knew him not: but that he should be made

[1] Matt. v. 38, 39.

manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

"And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

"And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!"

These were his last words as they were his first in this introduction of Jesus. From here Jesus takes up the work.

Only on two other occasions does John the Baptist appear. We shall have occasion to look at these places and consider the last words which he said about Jesus. It is most wonderful that, before Jesus had opened his mouth to say a word, and so far as we know, without their having come together, John the Baptist in introducing him should characterize the Christ with such absolute faithfulness.

V

THE MIRACLE AT CANA

(John II. 1–11)

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

"And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

"And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

"His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

"And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

"Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

"And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

"When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

"And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."

It is a sudden transformation from the philosophy of John with which he begins his Gospel, to this simple introduction of Jesus to the people. Indeed, one of the remarkable things about this record of the first miracle of Jesus is its simplicity. There is not a superfluous word in the whole story, merely a plain, straightforward statement of the facts, and yet the narrative is most beautiful in its rendering. It was no ordinary event, yet nothing is said about the wonder of the water being turned into wine. Its entire simplicity from beginning to end, and the calm attitude of Jesus in the transaction, is perfectly in keeping with all of his other actions and with his whole life.

A wedding was in those days a great occasion, varying in its importance according to the social standing of the people concerned. If the parties were possessed of wealth enough, the feasting and the jollity continued for two weeks or even more. Open house was kept with bounteous hospitality, all, whether bidden or not, being welcome to partake of the feast. Or the festivities only extended over a period of seven days, and perhaps even less, where the parties were of more humble circumstances in society.

It is claimed that some of Jesus' disciples, and more especially Nathanael, lived at Cana, and that the town was not far from Nazareth, six or seven miles per-

haps. We understand also, that Jesus, up to this time, had been to his neighbors, friends, and acquaintances, merely an ordinary man, going in and out among them as one of themselves; but of respectable lineage, of the class designated in those days as pious. His parents were closely connected with the priesthood, which gave them distinction beyond that which property could give them, though it is evident that they were possessed of some property for we know that Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to be taxed. So they were invited to the marriage feast, and the disciples also.

The marriage ceremony at this time, according to the customs of the Jews, partook very little of a religious form; it was primarily a social event. At the most, there were but one or two religious formalities. The ceremony merely consisted of the bridegroom and his attendants going to the house of the bride, and after she had joined them, the procession proceeded to the house of the groom; then the feasting and festivities took place.

Jesus' mother was there. The wine had given out. This of itself was an indication of lack of wealth on the part of the parties concerned. Whether the guests were more numerous than had been expected, or the funds were not enough to provide the feast, we do not know, but Mary came to Jesus and said, "They have no wine."

There is a great deal of mystery attending Mary, the mother of Jesus. We have the story of those wonderful events which occurred at his birth, enough to overwhelm an ordinary woman, yet it seems not to have affected her beyond the fact that, according to the record, she "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."[1] The question has been asked over and over again,—Did she know the character of her son? Did she know who her son really was? The question remains unanswered. We remember the time when he went to the ceremony of confirmation in the Jewish church, at twelve years of age, as all Jewish boys did. He was old enough to take care of himself, but being missed from among their group his parents went back in search of him, and found him, this boy of twelve, in the midst of the Doctors of the Law, asking questions and being questioned, attracting their attention in a most wonderful way. And Mary, like any other mother, chided him for having left the family, and having put them to the inconvenience of coming back to look for him. It was a perfectly natural domestic affair, so far as her actions were concerned. There seemed to be nothing in her mind at that time beyond the fact that he was an ordinary boy, and yet in answer to her chiding he said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"[2]

[1] Luke ii. 19. [2] Luke ii. 49.

This reply indicates that Jesus at twelve knew something at least of his own character. But he goes home to the humble carpenter shop and serves his full time, living among his kinsfolk until he comes to the age of a teacher,—thirty years under the Jewish law, it is said. During all this time the curtain falls over the scene; of this period of his life we know nothing except by inference, absolutely nothing. But this very silence indicates that he lived his life in a quiet, unassuming way which called forth no especial attention from the people by whom he was surrounded. But now he has been introduced as a leader of the people, yet he seems just as simple, just as modest. He does not assume anything because of the great things that John the Baptist said of him to his disciples. He goes with his friends and relatives to this wedding, which was probably a very unpretentious one. And now his mother comes again to our notice. She may not have understood him at the age of twelve years, but there must have been something in her thought of him at this time which makes the few simple words she utters seem of a deep significance. She asks no questions, she makes no suggestions, she says merely, as one of the guests might say to another guest, "They have no wine." Not a remarkable thing in the midst of the marriage feast. The wine had given out; that was all. Did she have some glimmering thought that per-

haps Jesus might supply the deficiency in some way? Evidently so, because, however we may interpret his answer, we see in it the recognition on his part that here was something for him to do. He turned to her and said, according to this translation, " Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come."

This answer has puzzled a great many people. His address to her, calling her " woman " instead of calling her " mother," is held by some as an indication of lack of respect. But we are told that among the Jews this title was considered an expression of respect whatever the station in life might be. There is another place where Jesus refers directly to his mother in the same way. John is the only one who records it. It was at the cross, when Jesus seeing his mother, and the disciple whom he loved, standing by, " He saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." You see, the same title is used again on this most affecting occasion, and at this solemn time the term " woman " was most certainly not devoid of either respect or affection.

As to the question which he asks of her, I must frankly say that in all my studies of this subject, I have not yet found an explanation of the reason why the translation at this place takes the form it does,

giving the strong impression, almost of rudeness in this reply of Jesus to his mother. Indeed it might, as it stands here, be taken almost as a rebuke,—"What have I to do with thee?" Of course much of its meaning would depend upon the tone of voice with which it was uttered. Now in the literal Greek, standing word for word, this passage reads, "What to me and to thee, is this, O woman?" That is very clear. What is this to you and to me that they have no wine? And in that there certainly is no disrespect. "What is it to you and me who are simply bidden as guests here?" That is all. "We are ordinary friends invited; why should you suggest to me that I do something about this; you have told me that they have no wine, but what is that to you and me?" I prefer to believe that this is the correct meaning of these words of Jesus. For there was in his heart, I believe, a shrinking from what he knew was before him. This must have been about the time of his sojourn in the wilderness; it must have been after he had had some realization of what lay before him in the three years ahead. He had made some preparation for those coming years, for he had chosen some of his disciples. He stood at the threshold of events of tremendous importance, and he knew it. And this modest, unassuming, straightforward, simple man, what wonder is it if the human of him shrank somewhat from what was to

come; recognizing what must follow any wonderful action on his part, what wonder if he did shrink from it and did say, "Mine hour is not yet come"?

We should remember that there is a difference between the social conditions of to-day and those of that time and place. In these days and in our own country a son emancipates himself from the conditions of childhood, but at that time and in a way more peculiar to the East, the son, the child, was always a child; and among the Jews in particular, the child was trained in obedience to his parents. So his mother according to the customs of that day had authority over this mature man of thirty years such as a mother does not have in this country and in these times. Whatever the thought of that mother with regard to that son, we see her here urging him forward, over the brink, as it were, making him face the conditions. And notwithstanding his modesty and his shrinking, she recognizes his character. She knows beforehand what he will do, and so she says to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." Could words express more faith than these? Do not these words show her absolute faith in Jesus and whatever he might do?

And now is to be performed the first of his great works, the first of those acts which we have been accustomed to call miracles. It is indeed a portentous time. Perhaps we have enlarged upon its importance

somewhat, because of the way we have been taught to regard miracles. In my boyhood days the miracle was looked upon as something that violated the law of nature, and therefore, the law of God; or it was something which set the law aside; something in opposition to law. It seems to me a little curious that those men who had this conception of the miracle did not recognize the position into which they thrust the miracle-worker, Jesus. Because if it were a violation of the law, the man who performed the miracle was in effect a rebel against the lawgiver; it could not be otherwise. The law, according to the old way of looking at things, was the result of divine action; it was set up for the purpose of governing all men, and here was a man, as these people would say, who violated God's law; thus you see, Jesus would be a rebel against God.

But as we now understand things there was in this act of Jesus no violation of law whatsoever, but only action of some sort in accordance with a law not then known, and even now not very clearly comprehended. There was no violation of God's law, no violation of the law of nature or of any law, but simply the recognition of a law, of which, up to that time, the world had not been aware. To-day even the humblest of us may talk with people many miles away, and think nothing of it. A hundred years ago if some of our scientists had been told that a man in Boston could

talk with a man in New York, he would have been told he was crazy, and that such a thing was impossible and would be in violation of all the laws of nature, simply because they were ignorant of certain laws, which had not then been discovered. Since then the marvel of the radio has become so common that we have lost our wonder in regard to it.

So what Jesus did was not a violation of law, but it was in accordance with a higher law which the people of that time did not understand, and which we ourselves understand but dimly. Therefore in accordance with his mother's suggestion, Jesus said to the servants, " Fill the waterpots with water."

This was merely one of the common duties of a well-ordered household. Here were the stone waterpots in their appropriate places, for use in the ordinary household affairs, and as the translation reads, " after the manner of the purifying of the Jews." The Jews were very particular and exacting with regard to their purifying. Indeed even the washing of the hands was with them a ceremony in itself. This washing was to be done at least before each meal and after each meal, sometimes even in the midst of the meal. This was what these waterpots were there for, to contain water for the washing of the hands, the purifying of the pots and kettles, and for use in the other regular household duties. People have tried to find some occult

meaning for the six waterpots, but there was nothing extraordinary about them or their presence there. Jesus never dealt with the abnormal and when any material thing was required in his work we notice that he always used the things close at hand. It was all very simple, nothing phenomenal in the means which Jesus used, and that to me is the greatness of it. There was no formality, no pretense, no ceremony or show on this occasion or at any other time when he performed his so-called miracles.

"And they filled them up to the brim." It was an uncommon thing for a guest to direct any of the affairs of the ceremony, but this man must have had something of authority or something impressive in his manner, for the servants did his bidding. When this was done, Jesus merely said in the simplest possible words, "Draw out now, and bear unto the governor[1] of the feast."

And it was *wine* that was poured forth. And what is wine? The juice of the grape, you answer. But do you know how wine is made? The changing of water into wine is one of the common occurrences in nature every day of the growing season, and yet we know no more regarding it than we do of this miracle. Every day this miracle of changing water into wine

[1] Their wedding festivities were managed by a director or governor, in whose hands all details were placed.

goes on before our eyes. This growing wonder in every plant, whether the grape, or the apple, or the pear, or fruit of any kind, or even in the grass we tread beneath our feet without a thought, this miracle goes on, the changing of the water into the life-blood of the plant. If we look at it from this point of view, here is a continual miracle going on before our eyes, and we think nothing of it. We turn to this miracle with wonder and astonishment at what Jesus did, forgetting that other miracles of God are happening all the time.

"When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine . . . he called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now." The old, or usual order of events is reversed, the good wine flows now. There had been the wine of truth before, and it had been given to a thirsty world, and the guests had drunk of it, and the world had gone on in its course, until it had well-nigh run out, this Jewish race and Jewish nation, standing there in its decrepitude. But they were to drink again of the good wine such as the world had not drunk of before, and so may we too, if we will.

To me, whatever else there may be in this story, it stands as a type of Jesus' work. He gives to this

marriage feast the best of wine. He gives to the world the wine of absolute truth; he gives to us and to the world as freely as he gave that other wine to the guests at Cana.

VI

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

(Matt. XXI. 12–17; Mark XI. 15–19; Luke XIX. 45–48; John II. 13–22)

There are in the Bible many apparent contradictions which may be trusted to disappear as our knowledge increases. The New Testament is not entirely free from these; nor is the teaching of Jesus, according to the usual interpretation. But all such seeming contradictions disappear in the light of the history and customs of that day, and in the light of the philosophy that underlies all that Jesus says.

The story of the driving of the traders from the temple at Jerusalem, or "The Cleansing of the Temple," as it is frequently called, is one which presents many difficulties. Perhaps the first to occur is the question of time. *When* did this happen? John in his account places it in the very earliest part of the ministry of Jesus, on his first recorded visit to Jerusalem after his baptism. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, on the contrary, put it at the close of his ministry, immediately after his public entry into Jerusalem, and only a few days before his arrest and crucifixion. This discrepancy has been recognized and discussed from early times, and various attempts at explanation

have been made. It has been thought that one of these must necessarily be incorrect, and authorities have differed as to which is right. It has also been claimed that there were two similar events, one at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, and the other at the end of it. Puzzling questions arise in connection with every effort to solve these difficulties, and no explanation yet made is without its objections.

But the question concerning the time when this event occurred is not the most perplexing in connection with the subject. The incident as it stands is in direct contradiction to the fundamental principles of the teaching of Jesus. It thus assumes greater importance than it would were it merely a question of dates, and therefore deserves careful examination.

Jesus, throughout his teachings, distinctly taught that man was not to be angry, was not to allow the thought or feeling of anger within himself under any circumstances. His teaching even goes beyond this, and holds that man is to put anger so completely away from himself that he does not even recognize it in another. In fact, he is so to purify himself from anger that he does not even remember that his brother has anything against him.[1] Now did he who taught such freedom from anger, *himself* become so angry as

[1] Matt. v. 21–26. (The Revised Version omits "without a cause.")

to overthrow the tables of the money-changers and to cast out of the temple all those who were buying and selling therein?

It is said in extenuation of this, that the case was one of righteous indignation. "Righteous indignation" is the pet expression of a great many people; but Jesus did not coin it nor endorse it. We do not find that he ever made any distinction between so-called "righteous indignation" and anger. He certainly never spoke of it otherwise than with disapprobation. If this was a case of indignation we cannot call it righteous if we are guided by his teaching on this and kindred subjects.

One of the precepts of Jesus is, "Judge not." He said of himself, "I judge no man." Did he judge here? When he saw all this traffic going on in the temple, there must have been judgment and condemnation of some sort before there could be the act of casting the offenders out, for that was but the execution of the judgment which had preceded it.

Jesus also said, "Resist not evil"; and from the beginning to the end of his career he followed this precept to the letter; notably at the end of his earthly ministry, when, if ever, there was a cause for resisting evil. When arrested, examined, and convicted by the Sanhedrin, and led off to execution, he made no resistance. Yet he said to Peter, who had struck off

the ear of the high priest's servant, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"[1] He might have resisted with overwhelming force and with the foreknowledge of certain success, but he did not.

The sum of all his ethical precepts which, if complied with, brings obedience to all the others, we remember, was expressed by Jesus thus: "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." Was not this act a distinct violation not only of this precept, but of his entire teaching? How can such an act be justified under these words? On the contrary, this incident is often used to modify the meaning of the Golden Rule, and to excuse, if not to justify, the violation of its plain requirements. These are very serious contradictions.

Not the least difficulty is found in the fact that such an action would be a violation of that great precept which rests on the principle of love. Jesus said at the outset of his career: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, *Love your enemies.*" These men were his enemies; according to his own teaching he should love them. Such an attack on them,—forcing them to leave their business suddenly

[1] Matt. xxvi. 53.

and without warning, scattering their property, and subjecting them to indignity and loss, if not to ruin, —was most certainly not the action of love. If, as the synoptics say, the event occurred just after his public entry into Jerusalem, it was only three or four days later when he said to his disciples: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another"; and then he specified the extent of his love for them when he said, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." Such love as this was certainly not in accord with the action in the temple. Under compliance with these precepts the incident could not have occurred.

Avoidance of all anger and of every other discordant thought,—including indignation and condemnation, non-resistance, which does not admit of self-defense, doing to others as one would be done by, such love as includes even enemies and is equal to the love of God for Jesus the Christ,—*these* are among the most distinctive characteristics of the teaching of Jesus. We may even say that they lie at the very foundation of his teaching. All that he says or does rests on them as a basis; yet in this act of driving out the dealers in the temple each of these rules of conduct was violated. Herein are greater difficulties than any question as to the *time* when the incident occurred or the possibility of its repetition. Is his own

action consistent with his teaching? Or did he on this one occasion give way to temptation and disobey his own teaching? The author of Hebrews says Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."[1] Is this correct; or did he sin on this occasion? These are important questions which occur to every thinking person, and they deserve a definite and satisfactory answer. Without such an answer the student must be continually in doubt. An examination of historical facts and conditions will be of advantage in an attempt to find a solution for these questions.

In the first place, the magnitude and importance of this feast of the passover, at which it is said the occurrence took place, are things we are hardly familiar with and do not estimate at their true value. We do not appreciate the size of the temple and its inclosed courts. The building itself, which included the holy of holies, was not large, but the area included in the courts which surrounded this inner structure was immense; and, unless some particular portion of it was named, it was all this that the Jews meant when they spoke of the temple. Latest investigations lead to estimates which make the temple precincts, roughly speaking, a quadrangle of not less than a thousand feet on a side, with an area of about thirty-five acres. It is estimated that it had a capacity for over two hun-

[1] Hebrews iv. 15.

dred thousand people, or twice as many as the Roman Colosseum. The length of the eastern wall was more than twice that of a side of the great Egyptian pyramid, and its total height on the precipitous side was only a few feet less than that of the same structure.

There is no doubt that the number of visitors to the temple at one of the great feasts was vastly in excess of the common impression. Every Jew of Judea and Galilee felt it his duty not only to come to the great annual feast himself, but to bring all his children and dependents. Jews all over the world also made it a point to come up to the feast as often as possible. And so we are told that, ordinarily, at this period in Jewish history, from two and a half to three million people came to Jerusalem during this feast, and of course visited the temple.

Each visitor was compelled by custom and religious requirement to bring an offering, for none might appear empty-handed. These offerings were on a scale commensurate with the wealth and position of those making them. Herod at one time, for a certain purpose, sacrificed three hundred oxen at a single feast. Josephus adds that this example was followed by others, so that it was impossible to number the sacrifices. On one occasion the question of the importance of the Jewish people came up, and the officials wished to convey to the Roman emperor an idea of the mag-

nitude of the Jewish feast. For this purpose the high priest kept an accurate account of the lambs sacrificed at that time, and reported two hundred and fifty-six thousand, five hundred. Just for the peace offering alone, it is said that Solomon on a special occasion offered twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. This was, as it were, making a huge butcher-shop of the temple.

The conduct of these sacrifices necessitated an immense business in providing the oxen, sheep, and doves. Two million people required a corresponding supply. To provide two hundred thousand sheep and lambs, or even half that number, is in itself not a small affair. The full extent of the temple business can only be suggested, because specific figures cannot be had. The values involved must have been very great. Of course, not all these transactions were in the temple precincts, but probably that was the largest single place for the traffic.

The character of these commercial transactions must have been, in some respects at least, in keeping with that of the ordinary Eastern market, where similar transactions are carried on. Matthew, Mark, and Luke unite in saying that Jesus characterized it as "a den of thieves." [1]

[1] The Greek word rendered "thieves" in Matthew, Mark, and Luke indicates not merely petty stealers, but men of violence banded together.

This was no exaggeration. "Corners" in the market are not a modern affair. They had their "corners" then as we have them in these days. A single instance in illustration will be enough to show what must often have occurred. The dove was the poor man's offering. If he could not afford a calf, or a sheep, or an ox, it was allowable for him to offer a dove or a pair of doves. We are told that on one occasion a man made a corner in doves and ran the price up to what would be equivalent to about three dollars and eighty cents a pair. We can better understand what this means when we remember that the pay for an ordinary day's labor at that time was about twelve and a half cents, and such an amount would be more than the laborer would receive for a month. But another man "broke the market," and doves were sold the same day for five cents a pair. If such extortion was effected with doves, what was probably done with sheep and oxen?

Under their law, every Jew who had arrived at the age of twenty years was expected once a year to pay a half-shekel into the temple treasury as a ransom for his soul;[1] and that payment must be made in the sacred Jewish coinage. No other money could be used, because any other would not have satisfied the strict requirements of the Mosaic law. In that country,

[1] Exodus xxx. 12–16.

crossed as it was in various directions by the highways of commercial traffic, and with a population made up of diverse races, there were many kinds of money. From this condition of affairs, as well as because large sums were sent by Jews living elsewhere, the business of the money-changers became a necessity. They furnished the half-shekel for the temple worshippers in exchange for any coinage they might chance to bring. At the middle of the month preceding the great feast, every little hamlet in Judea and Galilee was visited by these officials, giving the people an opportunity beforehand to change their money into the ancient money of Israel in readiness for the offering at the feast. At a prescribed time these men returned to Jerusalem, and then the exchange could be accomplished only there.

The value of the annual offering in half-shekels is conservatively estimated,—of course varying from year to year,—at about three hundred thousand dollars. The annual profits to the money-changers from their legal fees were at least forty-five thousand dollars a year. These figures show the magnitude of this part of the business of the money-changers. This was not a small matter in a community where twelve and a half to fifteen cents was the price of an ordinary day's labor. In the proportion which this bears to the price of labor in these days, these profits would have

amounted to several hundred thousand dollars, and the gross receipts of the half-shekel tax would reach into the millions.

The political conditions at that time also have an important bearing on our subject. The Roman authorities appointed the high priest, because he was not only the head of the church but the political head of the nation as well, and therefore it behooved them that they should have a man in this office who was responsible to them and within their control. Annas had obtained influence with the Romans and received the appointment. It is well known that this office and many others were literally bought and sold.

In the earlier days the traffic in the things necessary for the sacrifices was carried on outside the city walls in the vicinity of the gate nearest the temple. But under the existing political conditions it is easy to see how the traffic found its way into the sacred city, and finally into the court of the Gentiles, which was the large court of the temple. Those from a distance could not easily drive their cattle and sheep all the way. It was more convenient for the purchasers to obtain what they wanted inside the city gates. For the same reasons they brought them up to the entrance of the temple itself. From this it was only a step to the large outer public court. For corrupt officials, excuses for the infringement were plenty. Because the

sheep, oxen, and doves were necessary for the temple service, a half-sacred character might be claimed for the traffic. The exchange of the money had a similar plea. This furnished an excuse for allowing it within the temple walls. These temple bazaars were the property and one of the principal sources of income of the family of the unscrupulous Annas, and were popularly known by his name. Finally men rented places for the carrying on of this traffic in this court, just as men rent stalls in the public markets of our cities to-day. A man paid for his place and it belonged to him.

This understanding of the character and magnitude of the business, its legality in form at least, together with its connection with the highest officials, puts a different appearance upon the ejection when looked at from their point of view. It was a violation of their vested rights as they understood them. The Jew of that day was very much like the Jew of to-day, and in that particular not altogether different from the American or European. He will give up some things, but he does not readily give up his property nor allow interference with his business. This action which we are considering was an attack on both, as well as a disturbance of the peace.

For a better understanding of the biblical narrative and of the subject generally, it is well to read the dif-

ferent accounts in the four Gospels. That given by John, which represents the incident as occurring at the earlier date, really stands by itself, distinct from the others. Matthew and Mark record that Jesus "cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves;" while John states that, "when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables." John is the only one who mentions the whip of cords, and according to the Revised Version, as well as the Greek, the inference is that he used this in casting out the *animals* ("both the sheep and the oxen") but not the *people*.

Imagine for a moment the great commotion that must have taken place,—the consternation of the buyers and sellers, as well as the astonishment of the crowd of onlookers, the confusion caused by the thousands of cattle and sheep as they were thus unceremoniously driven out of the temple, the overturning of the tables and other furniture, and the scattering of the coin as it was poured out on the floor!

And then what followed all this confusion? The Gospels make it a picture of peace. In the very next sentence Matthew says: "The blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them." The

contrast, not to say the incongruity, between the scene which this suggests, and the one which, according to the records, had but just occurred, is startling. Were there no other immediate consequences? Where were the priests and other temple officials, including their hundreds of assistants and those whose business it must have been to keep order? Where was the Roman garrison, always close at hand in the city, ready to interfere and quell riotous proceedings? Here stood this man, single-handed and alone, his habit unresisting and mild; and the blind and the lame came to him and he healed them! And children were there, too! A cyclone as it were, followed on the instant by perfect peace!

The next occurrence as recorded by Matthew is no less remarkable: "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David, they were sore displeased." The context clearly indicates that "*wonderful things*" must refer to the healing of the blind and the lame, and not to the interference with the secular affairs of the temple. There is not one word about the driving out of the money-changers and traders. That incident would seem to have been entirely forgotten. The cause of their displeasure appears to be that the children, because of the acts of healing, are crying out

their words of praise. Not the slightest reference is made to the destruction of property which, according to the narrative, had just occurred; nor is there any allusion to the disorder and confusion which must have been caused by the sudden exit of the terrorized dealers and their animals. The record merely states that when the children cried, "Hosanna to the son of David," the chief priests and scribes in sore displeasure question Jesus saying, "Hearest thou what these say?" To this Jesus replies, "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?"

Mark and Luke take up the story here where Matthew leaves it: "He taught daily in the temple"; and "The scribes and chief priests heard, and sought how they might destroy him; for they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine." To this Luke adds, "And could not find what they might do." Yet here was abundant opportunity for charging him with disturbing the peace, raising a serious commotion, and violating the customs, if not the laws, of the land. They long had wanted some excuse by which they might bring before Pilate a charge against him of violating the civil law. Here was ample cause in the case of the money-changers, if no other. They were duly and legally authorized to transact the business, and had at the very least a semi-

official character. Jesus had interfered with the transaction of their official business, and had also deprived them of their property. John says he poured out their money. If a man should to-day go into the place of business of another and scatter his money, even if he did not appropriate any of it, such action would warrant immediate legal proceedings. If this occurred at the beginning of his ministry, as John says, here was ample cause for prosecution. And yet all through Jesus' career the political and religious leaders were seeking some excuse whereby they could bring the power of the law against him. We remember that even after his arrest, evidence against him could not be found. If this occurred at the end of his ministry, as the others say, what need for further search after some serious charge against him? Here was the very thing ready to their hand. Note also another point. Mark says the priests and scribes "feared him, because the people were astonished at his doctrine." Luke says they sought to destroy him, "for all the people were very attentive to hear him." All this together shows that the cause of their animosity was not these overt acts against the dealers (for these are not mentioned), but his teaching or doctrine, and the great interest of the people in him.

The account says that for several days following, Jesus went out of the city each evening, returning in

the morning. Daily he went into the temple without the slightest concealment, and publicly taught there. He is met by the chief priests of the temple, and leaders of the people, and they ask him for his authority, and various other questions; but they do not mention the disturbance in the temple. No charge was made against him because of it; nor, so far as we have the record, was anything ever said in reference to it.

Finally, false witnesses so-called were found, who testified that Jesus said he was able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. There is a peculiarity about this testimony. John's account shows that Jesus did use similar words, and yet Matthew and Mark[1] say the charge was false. How false? If Jesus did use these words, was not the testimony true? In the second chapter of John we read that Jesus said in answer to the question of the Jews at this time:

"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

"Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

"*But he spake of the temple of his body.*"

Thus we see that Jesus did indeed use words similar to those testified to by the witnesses, but with a mean-

[1] Matt. xxvi. 60, 61; Mark xiv. 57, 58.

ing entirely different from that which they attached to them. They spoke of the temple in Jerusalem, which Herod had not yet completed. Jesus spoke of the temple of *himself;* the place for worship, "neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem," of which he told the Samaritan woman. They entirely misunderstood him.

How they reviled him as he hung on the cross! The passers-by taunted him, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself." The chief priests and scribes mocked him, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." Other things also were "cast in his teeth," but not one word from the dealers of the temple, or from their friends! The crucifixion was on Friday. The dealers were driven out probably on the Monday before. Is it possible that any considerable number of fairly respectable and influential men, who had been so outraged in person and property, would have been ignorant of Jesus' arrest and execution? And if they had known of it, would they not also have been there to witness his discomfiture and join with others in reviling him? They surely had not forgiven him. Would they have refrained from jeers and taunts? But there is no record of them. It is therefore fair to conclude that none were offered.

But I think *John* gives us the key to the situation.

As with the witnesses and others who heard Jesus at that time, so with us, the difficulty arises from our misunderstanding of what is meant by "*the temple.*" The difficulty will disappear if by "the temple" out of which the dealers were driven we understand, not the structure in Jerusalem, but the temple of himself.

We remember that "in all points he was tempted like as we are." Jesus entered into the great place of Jewish worship, a place made sacred by their law and custom, and at that time believed by them to be the only place in the whole world where God could be worshipped as He should be. He saw this place desecrated by commercial transactions, some of them of the worst kind. This naturally might suggest to him his own possibilities, what *he* might do with the sacred power which he so well knew how to wield. We must not forget that, whatever the estimate in which we hold him, Jesus had a strictly human side. Might not this exploitation of the necessities of religious observances suggest to him the wealth which he might obtain by means of the power which he possessed, if he would use it for similar purposes? What would those wealthy people have given for the healing of their loved ones,—as a single instance, the centurion who was so wealthy that he could build a synagogue for the Jews,—what would he not have given, had the payment of money become a question? If, as John

narrates, this incident occurred early in his ministry, why may not this temptation have come to him at this time, just as, a little while before, there came to him in the wilderness, the temptation to satisfy his hunger, or to throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple, or to make himself ruler of the world? If that series of temptations had come to him at one time, why not this one now? Is it not entirely possible that,—suggested by seeing other men making wealth out of the needs of sacred things,—there may have come to him the temptation to make gain out of his own sacred power? But he cast the idea out of his mind now just as he had done before. He literally drove the money-changers out of the temple of himself, the traffic thought out of his own mind, as with a whip of small cords. The "temple" was not the temple of Jerusalem, not a temple made with hands, but, as John explains, it was the temple of God, which was within himself.

This interpretation of the story becomes all the more reasonable when we remember that many of the ethical precepts of Jesus depend for their observance upon casting the erroneous or tempting thought out of the mind. That was clearly the method which he followed in the wilderness. In each instance there, he substituted the thought of truth for the thought of error, thus casting out the wrong thought. In the same

way, on this occasion, he cast out of the temple of himself the temptation to gain wealth by means of the power of God which he possessed. Thus, reading with this interpretation in mind, he did not literally drive the money-changers out of the temple building, any more than he was carried by the devil through the air from the wilderness to the pinnacle of the temple, or to the mountain top; but he drove out of himself the thoughts of covetousness and avarice, as well as the visions of wealth and ease. I doubt not it was done immediately, boldly, and thoroughly. With this interpretation the historical difficulties disappear as well as all inconsistencies with his teaching.

But one will at once exclaim: "Here is a story which has all the appearance of historical fact, and do you propose to dispose of it in this manner?" We have seen the incongruity and contradiction involved if we accept it literally. The difficulties in this explanation are less. Similarly in the story of the temptation in the wilderness, there is all the literalness of a narrative of an actual incident, if it is read with that thought in mind. The generally accepted interpretation of today is the same in character as the one here offered for the story of the cleansing of the temple.

One story may be taken quite as literally as the other. Here is the crowd of dealers in the temple, and the bare statement that they were driven out. There

we have a personal devil and his verbal suggestions, Jesus' replies, the transportation from the wilderness to the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem, and the second flight to the mountain. These were once taken as statements of literal fact, just as this story of the temple still is. The child who asked how the devil got Jesus from the wilderness to the pinnacle of the temple, and was told that the devil took him in his arms and flew through the air with him, is not now so very old. The famous French artist Tissot, whose paintings have been admired all over the world, does not hesitate to put this literal interpretation on his canvas. That was the old interpretation, still alive in many minds. There is just as much reason for believing in the literalness of the story of the temptation in the wilderness, as there is for believing that Jesus *really* drove the money-changers out of the temple, and yet a large class of intelligent people have set the literalness of the former aside. If we apply the same rules to both these stories, and accept an interpretation for the cleansing of the temple similar to that which is now accepted for the incident in the wilderness, then the difficulties and contradictions disappear. It will then make no difference whether it occurred near the beginning of Jesus' ministry or at its close. It may well have been on both occasions. The most remarkable silence of his enemies is accounted for, not

only when they were searching for something to use as an accusation against him, during the years when he came and went amongst them, and at his trial, but also when they taunted him as he hung on the cross.

Probably no other single thing in all the story of the Gospels has been so often quoted in excuse for violation of the plain meaning of the great social precepts of Jesus; nor has anything else been used with such persistence in an attempt to pervert them from what would otherwise be their unquestioned interpretation. By this explanation and interpretation, this incident, instead of appearing as something at variance with the teaching of Jesus, becomes a beautiful illustration of it. His fundamental precepts are completely vindicated, and all appearances of contradiction of his own cardinal rules of conduct wholly disappear. There is no longer any apparent need to modify his precepts or to discard any of them entirely, in order to accommodate them to his own action on this occasion, and thus save him from the charge of violating them. And the one possible stain on his character is found never to have existed. We now see him who taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors," acting fully up to his own teaching and faithfully following his own precepts. With this interpretation, the greatest contradiction in the story of the Gospels disappears.

VII

THE INTERVIEW WITH NICODEMUS
(John III. 1–13)

"THERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews."

This same man appears again in this Gospel on two other occasions, the first being when the Jews were seeking Jesus' arrest. Nicodemus asked of them the question, "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him?" And then afterward, when Joseph of Arimathea had claimed the body after the crucifixion, Nicodemus appeared with one hundred pounds of spices for the burial. In addition to this, there is a large amount of tradition with regard to Nicodemus, and considerable speculation concerning him. It is quite generally admitted that Nicodemus was a very wealthy man; indeed his wealth is indicated by the amount that he contributed to the burial. That he was a man of prominence is certain; that he was a member of the Sanhedrin was probable; that he was of the Pharisees our text here states. His acts generally indicate the same kind of character as shown in this interview with Jesus. He had evidently been a timid man and lacking in positiveness, but after the

crucifixion he was cast out of the synagogue because of his religious convictions.

"The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

It is a question as to who is meant by "*we*." The assumption on the part of critics is, that Nicodemus, as a Pharisee, speaks for the Pharisees, and that they among themselves believed that Jesus was a teacher come from God. If it is true that many of the Pharisees believed as Nicodemus did, we may conclude that they, like him, were either timid, at least in this matter, or else they were less sincere than Nicodemus, in that they purposely acted contrary to their own convictions.

According to the story, Nicodemus introduced himself after the Eastern fashion of offering polite compliments to Jesus. I myself have been sometimes inclined to take his apparent interest in this interview as merely a matter of courtesy on his part, and yet on the other hand, when we look upon the things he did, recognizing that he was by nature a timid man, I feel that Nicodemus may have meant all that he said to Jesus, but did not have the moral courage to express his belief publicly. "A teacher come from God," he says, and his reason for this assertion,—"because

no man can do these miracles except God be with him." Whether or not Nicodemus was the first to recognize these acts as indicative of the greatness of Jesus, this we do know, that vast multitudes since that time have believed in Jesus because they believed the story of the miracles that he did.

I am convinced that the stories in the Gospels, and particularly in the Gospel of John, are much condensed, that is, that the author in writing omitted what he considered as unnecessary portions of the story. This is one of the places where it seems to me that abridgment occurs, for the break in continuity between the words of Nicodemus and the answering words of Jesus appears to be great. The reply of Jesus seems not only extremely abrupt but lacks connection with the words of Nicodemus preceding it. At any rate, Nicodemus did no more than the ordinary conversationalist in that day among the Jews, in using complimentary terms by way of introduction. So far as our narrative goes, it seems as if Jesus utterly ignored the words of Nicodemus. We can but imagine that there must have been something that led up to the following statement made by Jesus, yet the essential thing is what is here set down as the reply to Nicodemus.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Jesus begins with great earnestness, not to say, solemnity. The expression, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee" was an introduction frequently used by him, especially when he was about to declare something of the utmost importance. "Except a man be born again." This is rendered in the Revised Version, "Except a man be born *anew,*" or "*from above.*" What does this mean? These words have been widely quoted, have been used in many and different ways, and have had various interpretations. The word that is here translated "born" is the same word that occurs in the first chapter of this Gospel: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were *born,* not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "*Born of God*" it reads; and in the discussion of this first chapter it was shown how we all may trace our existence back to God, and how our relationship to Him is indeed closer than that of a child to its parent. Also this relationship is far above anything which we have conceived in our idea of the word "Father." From Him alone we have our true birth. Lost to sight it may be, as we see ourselves and others, yet it is the absolute truth of our existence. Born of God, literally, aye more than literally,—*His children!*

You remember how Jesus said that "the Son of

man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."[1] The thing which is "lost" is in existence at the time, only *out of sight.* And so in this case our true birthright has been, as it were, out of our sight, —unrecognized; we have had no conception of what we really are. Therefore, how fitting that to this man, Nicodemus,—bound up in materiality as he appeared to be, and not recognizing spiritual things, as the record seems to show,—how fitting that Jesus should express to him the declaration that not only he, but each and every man must be born again, born anew, must enter into his true birthright.

You must be born *again.* The word here translated "again" is of importance. Sometimes it means "from the beginning" or "from the first." Luke so uses the word in the introduction to his Gospel: "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things *from the very first.*"[2] "From the first" in this passage is the rendering of the same Greek word that is translated "again" in the one we are here considering.

But more exactly the Greek word refers not to time but to place. It more often means, "from above, from the top,[3] from a higher plane, from on high." John the Baptist said a short time afterward, "He that

[1] Luke xix. 10. [2] Luke i. 3.
[3] Matt. xxvii. 50, 51; Mark xv. 38; John xix. 23.

cometh *from above* is above all." Here the word rendered "from above" is the same word elsewhere translated "again." John the Baptist explains this phrase by adding, "He that cometh *from heaven* is above all."[1]

Jesus, then, does not mean merely "born twice," "born once more as before," but the rebirth is to be *different in kind.* One must be born from above or from the first, from the very beginning; one must be born anew,—the real spiritual birth. We often say, "I made a mistake in my work, I must do it all over *again.*" We mean we must do it differently, free from the previous faults. We must, as it were, "take a fresh start," with the idea of improved procedure in the light of a new understanding.

So "except one be born *anew* he cannot see the kingdom of God." We must go back to our true, spiritual selves, in order to see, or to realize the kingdom of God; we must look beyond this material self which seems to envelop us, and see ourselves as we are in reality; we must manifest ourselves in the truth. And strange as it may seem, this brings us to a plain psychological, or even a physiological fact. Our sense perceptions which have been so exclusively our guides, on which we place so much importance and in which we so implicitly believe, do not tell us one single thing

[1] John iii. 31.

with regard to things spiritual, with regard to our inner selves. They are absolutely silent regarding these. Materiality does not discern spirituality. Our material selves really disclose nothing of the spiritual life. It is the spiritual self only that discerns the Spirit. Therefore we must turn away from the material to the spiritual before we can enter into the recognition of the kingdom of God. The true life of us, which is of God, is not perceived under any circumstances by the external man, neither can it be.

An illustration of this is found in the work of our scientists. Men trained to think along scientific lines have dissected the body, have studied it in every possible way, hunting for life in the midst of materiality, but they have never found it. Consequently many have declared that there is no life but the life of the flesh, and that this life terminates with the death of the body. This is the natural outcome of knowledge acquired from a purely materialistic source. So, at the last analysis, science reverts to this same proposition, with which it must eventually agree: we must recognize our deathless, spiritual selves, our birth in the image of God, in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven, which is the kingdom of God. This kingdom is the kingdom of truth and of absolute right, which Jesus says is within you. Notice the wonderful harmony of it all, and how seemingly disconnected things

are closely related. The kingdom of God is within us, and there must be the recognition of our origin, our source, in order that we may perceive this. The spiritual kingdom of God is discerned only by the spiritual self, and can be discerned in no other way. And so we find that Jesus' words here, misunderstood and misinterpreted as they have been, stand for an exact scientific truth: "Except ye be born again, ye cannot see the kingdom of God."

"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

This reply of Nicodemus is just like the response which materiality always gives to spiritual things. A flat denial by imputation, for to Nicodemus who sees only from the material or earthly side of things, to be born again is an utter impossibility.

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

It is said that the business of Nicodemus, out of which he probably gained a portion of his wealth, was the furnishing of the water for the purification ceremonies in the temple. Thus Jesus used his own occupation in explaining to him the truth. Water was the

token in those days to denote purification. "Except a man be born of water," except he be purified, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

John the Baptist came preaching repentance of sins; and remember that "repentance" means a "change of mind"; a change of mind with regard to erroneous things and a putting away of all discordant thoughts, as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Seemingly Jesus is trying to state, though in different words, the same idea in his conversation with Nicodemus. He then expresses the same thought that we have been discussing, for he goes on to say:

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Materiality is materiality, and spirit is spirit, and between the two is an impassable gulf. The good tree bringeth forth good fruit; the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. We cannot transmute darkness into light; we cannot turn evil into good. Thus we find Jesus strikingly scientific in his statements when we really understand him.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

In the Greek the word that is used for "spirit" is the same word that is used for "wind." Compare our "*breath* of life." Jesus is simply describing *spirit* by comparing it to the invisible, intangible but material *wind*. Compare Acts ii. 2 where the Holy Spirit comes like a "*mighty wind*." According to the marginal reading of the Revised Version, these two verses may be rendered as follows: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born from above. The Spirit breatheth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Another translation reads: "Do not wonder because I said to thee, you must be born from above. The Spirit breathes where it will. Thou hearest the sound of its voice, but dost not know whence it comes, or whither it goes. Thus is it with every one that hath been born of the Spirit."

But instead of abating, Nicodemus' amazement increased, and he said unto Jesus, "How can these things be?" It is no wonder that Nicodemus, being a man who saw only material things, exclaimed thus from the very depths of his soul.

What a glorious truth this is that Jesus taught, and yet how simple and how plain! Just the casting off of the erroneous thought; that is all. It is merely throwing off the dark, external garment of the material

self and letting the inner light of the spiritual self shine through in all its glory.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master (teacher, R. V.) of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

Nicodemus, according to the report here, has nothing more to say. He is silent because he has literally no understanding of what Jesus is saying. But Jesus continues:

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness."

Or, "We speak what we know and testify to what we have seen, but you understand it not." "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness comprehends it not" is a truth that applies to this situation.

Instead of appealing to the reason of Nicodemus and trying to explain the truth to him, Jesus finally resorts to a plain assertion: "We speak of things we do know." Jesus having tried, so far as he could, to awaken the spiritual perception of Nicodemus, merely asserts, "We know these things are so." How often this is the experience of the person who is trying to promulgate some new idea! At the last, without any explanation, one simply says, "I know it is so." Jesus, talking to Nicodemus, was as the man bathed in the

glorious light of the noonday sun talking to a man who had never seen it.

"If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"

And then he closes with this impressive declaration, which is absolutely true:

"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

No man enters into the recognition of spiritual things but he that is born of the Spirit. No man hath ascended up into heaven but he that comes down from heaven, even the Son of man who is born, as we have read, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God.*" Although we now perceive it but dimly, yet it is a fact that this description applies to each of us, applies to *every* human being. We need only recognize our own spiritual existence, our own spiritual being, to perceive this truth, and when we do that in its fullness, all error will fall away, will disappear, and we shall know that we are from heaven. Indeed, we shall then be conscious that heaven is both *here* and *now;* that we are literally, *in* heaven.

VIII

SALVATION AND DAMNATION
(John III. 14–21)

THE story of the interview with Nicodemus divides itself naturally into two parts. In the first part, which was considered in the last chapter, the first person is used. We have simply a dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus. In the part of the account which we are now taking up, the nominative changes and is in the third person; and the story is more in the nature of a narrative; we pass from the consideration of what Jesus *said,* to something *about* Jesus. Although contrary to the usual interpretation, I am inclined to think that John in writing down his version of the story may have,—perhaps without intending it as many another sometimes does,—wandered from the direct story into a dissertation in which he includes some of his own ideas. He has become, as it were, swallowed up in the immensity of his theme, and when he has concluded with the last words of Jesus as given in the thirteenth verse, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven," he is, so to speak, overcome by his emotion, by his recognition of the

truth in this declaration, so tremendous in its significance. Consequently, continuing with his own meditations, his own thought, he says:

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:
"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

The comparison relating to the serpent has two possible interpretations, each being distinct in meaning and each having its phase of truth. The first thought that will naturally come to one's mind is the comparison with the event in the wilderness when famine and disease had attacked the Jews. The brass serpent was lifted up that whosoever looked upon it might be healed, and the narrative states that all were healed. So taking that for his illustration he says, in the rendering of the Revised Version: "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life." There is somewhat of a mystical idea connected with the expression, "lifted up." Jesus himself is reported to have said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."[1]

The foregoing is one interpretation. The other is a purely spiritual one and is more in accordance with

[1] John xii. 32.

Jesus' philosophy. We have seen in our study of this Gospel how the Son, the spiritual being, exists in every one. That which was made was life in God. This life of God is in you and in me, for we are born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This is the spiritual interpretation of "*the Son*"; this is the divine Son of the Divine Father. We are, metaphorically, to "lift up" that Son in ourselves, that is, we are to place our lives on a higher plane than we have been accustomed to do, in order that we may the more completely express the spiritual existence which God the Father has given us. And we should not lose sight of the fact that this spiritual existence is the reality of *every* human being; no one is left out of this inheritance, because *all* life is of God's life. And if, through recognition of this wondrous truth regarding ourselves and all our fellow beings, we truly express the spiritual being which we indeed are, we shall come into a realization of eternal life that, at this present time, we can scarcely comprehend.

However much our fellow man may hide his light behind the veil of materiality, however much we may condemn him for the things he does, however far away we may put him from ourselves, whatever the wall we may build up between him and us, yet beyond all this, even though we see it not, is that spiritual life which

is of God. We may condemn him, we may even hate him, yet that spark of the Infinite Life is within him, just as much as in ourselves. And we cannot come into a full and complete recognition of this life in our own spiritual selves until we also recognize the same life existing within all our fellow beings. Whatever may be the outward appearance, however much we may notice the sins or mistakes of another, yet there is that spiritual life existing within each individual. We are to lift that up in our own hearts. In doing this we shall realize that, instead of being separate, apart from us, as we imagined, they are one with us, as they are one with the Divine Father. And so, as we lift up the Son of man in ourselves and in others, will we come into a fuller, deeper understanding of that life which is God's life and which is eternal. The next declaration follows naturally in order:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,[1] that whosoever believeth in him (the Son) should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Another rendering of this passage is: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Son, the only begotten." "For God so *loved* the world." Do we understand what His love is? Indeed we do not, but we do know that it transcends all else, as the noonday

[1] See Chapter IV, pages 45–47.

sun transcends the feeblest star that twinkles in the sky at midnight. In our intercourse with our fellow beings, how often have we harbored other feelings than those of love, feelings that were indeed far removed from love, and have felt that we were justified in so doing! How often have thoughts of vengeance, condemnation, destruction, envy, jealousy, and a whole host of similar thoughts filled our minds to the exclusion of all else! In our judgment of others and in our self-righteousness, we may have felt that we have progressed beyond the thoughts of jealousy and of hate to those of mercy and of justice. But God's love is beyond all that. In His love there is no condemnation, for love does not condemn, neither merely mercy, for His love passes even mercy. Paul said that the whole world was under the condemnation of sin; that the whole world was a world of sinners, and from the external point of view, that was true. For many years the world had had its decalogue, which had been founded on, "Thou shalt not." The time had arrived, if ever it was to arrive, for vengeance, for justice, for punishment, and condemnation. But, as John states here, *God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son,* that through his teaching the world might be saved from all such errors.

What is the judgment of the world when a man has committed crimes innumerable and refused to reform?

What do *we* do when a man has gone wrong, when he is beyond redemption as we see it? What do we think is the right thing to do? At the least, we shut him up; at the most, we do what we can to terminate his life. We kill him, and call it justice. We think we are reforming the world by that course, although that course has been tried for many centuries and has failed, and it always will fail. It is *love that reforms* and it is love that is reforming the world. It is our recognition of God's love for us that is making the world better. No man was ever reformed by hate; many a man has been loved into better things. What a contrast between the way of the world, between the ideas of justice as practised by mankind these many centuries, and the course as set forth here that God the Father so loved the world that He gave His Son, that we might come into an understanding of the truth and of eternal life. To continue:

"For God sent not His (*the*—R. V.) Son into the world to condemn[1] (or judge) the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned (judged—R. V.): but he that believeth not is condemned (hath been judged—R. V.) already, because he hath

[1] The root of the word here translated "condemn," appears also in the noun "condemnation." These words are translated elsewhere in the New Testament as "damn" and "damnation." The real meaning is merely "judge" and "judgment." The Revised Version so translates it.

not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

According to the ideas of the world, condemnation was what the world deserved. But instead of sending His Son as a judge to condemn the world, God sent him to love it into righteousness.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned." To "believe on him" does not mean simply belief in Jesus, the man, but it does mean the recognition of the truth as expressed by the spiritual Christ. And whoever recognizes the truth, and believes in it, is not condemned but is passed from death unto life eternal.

"He that believeth not is condemned already." There is no need of condemnation from any other source, because the unbeliever is already condemned. He has of his own accord, by his very unbelief, himself entered into condemnation. The condemnation takes place in his own heart, in that he does not, and has not, recognized the truth. When he does recognize the truth, he then comes into a clear understanding of evil or error, and when he has learned to judge correctly he puts away the evil or error forever, and from choice he thereafter walks in the truth. When we do indeed realize the glory of ourselves as spiritual beings, we become ourselves the judges, yet not of ourselves but of the things of ourselves. As Jesus said later

on, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment[1] unto the Son; that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."[2] Is not this an inspiration for the lifting up of the Son, the spiritual being, within ourselves and others? The lifting up of that divine being which we are, or which is within each one of us, into the honor which we give to the Father Himself?

"He that believeth not is condemned already, *because* he hath not believed *in the name of* the only begotten Son of God." As before stated, the word "name" in those ancient days did not signify a mere designation, as the word has come to be used now; thus the phrase "in the name of," conveyed a deeper meaning than it does to us. A name as given to a person in those days usually represented some characteristic that was essential to or peculiar to that person. And so, to believe "in the name of the only begotten Son of God," is to believe in the essential characteristics of that only begotten Son; is to believe in that for which the Son stands. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up; and so will the understanding of the truth be advanced. And when it is once fully under-

[1] The word "judgment" is one we are familiar with under a different guise. We spell it "crisis," the Greeks spelled it "krisis."

[2] John v. 22, 23.

stood that the spiritual being,—Son of man, Son of God,—is the true, the real being of man, then do I think we shall behold the glory of *each* "Son of man"; "the glory as of an only begotten from a father."

"And this is the condemnation (judgment—R. V.), that light [1] is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

For answer to this let us go back to our philosophy in the first chapter: "That which hath been made was life in Him; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not," or "knew not of it." The light *has* come into the world, and has been in the world all these years, and the world, because of its evil deeds, has recognized it not.

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." (Exposed or detected.)

Meaning: He who does evil hates the light, neither walketh in the light, for fear his deeds shall be discovered.

"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

[1] The original reads, "*the* light."

And these words remind us of those other words of Jesus spoken in the Sermon on the Mount: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." It seems to me that the best analysis of salvation and condemnation that we can find anywhere is right here in these words. They that believe in the Son are not condemned, but they that believe not are already condemned. For this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." Or in other words, he who does the right, he who lives the true life, walks in the light, that his deeds may be known or may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God, that is, have been done according to God's will.

So it is with us all. God has left us in absolute freedom. The teachings of modern psychology substantiate this idea: *We are free.* Thus it rests with each one of us to make of himself what he will. In our thinking is the seed and root of all our actions, and according to our thoughts,—*so* are our actions. "As

a man thinketh in his heart, *so* is he." Through the control of our thinking, we control our actions, and thus we become either condemned or saved. Saved not from destruction, not from "eternal torment," but saved from ignorance, from the evil wrought by our material selves. Because we are indeed the children of God, there must be in us that which is of His Spirit, which is of His Life, and it must at last shine out in the radiance of eternal light and understanding.

IX

THE FAREWELL OF JOHN THE BAPTIST
(John III. 22–36; IV. 1–3)

In this story of the Gospels, John the Baptist appears three times; first, distinctly as a forerunner prophesying the immediate coming of the Christ. This we have also in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Merging into this as a sequel to it, is the story of the Baptism, and the introduction of Jesus by John, expressed in the most remarkable language, full of meaning, full of prophecy, full of truth. And then, as John tells the story, we get a little glimpse of Jesus in the beginning of his work and now again we have the story of the Baptism. John the Baptist's appearance here strikes a changed note entirely, distinct from either of the two other views which we have of him. His first appearance was one of prophecy; his second represented a realization in the fulfillment of that prophecy. This last appearance proclaims to us the recognition that his work is done. And that is our subject of this chapter, this last personal glimpse which we get of John the Baptist.

It is true we have certain mention of him later on. Both Matthew and Luke refer again to John at the

time of his imprisonment when he sent two of his disciples to make inquiry of Jesus. And these said unto him: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"[1] We cannot help our wonderment here at John's sending this inquiry to Jesus, as though he were in doubt as to his own prophecy concerning Jesus, the Messiah, whom he had introduced with such glowing terms. Being in prison, he may have been discouraged and thought that Jesus should liberate him. The light of John had apparently gone out. Why should such visions as he had had at the very beginning, and such illumination in the midst of his career, have resulted in such darkness that he did not even know whether this man of whom he had heard was really the one he had introduced or not? Whence comes this lack of understanding on the part of one who seemingly understood so very much at first? It seems to me that the explanation lies in the character, or is suggested in the character of the general teaching of John the Baptist. He is dealing almost wholly with external things. It is true he preaches righteousness, and repentance, and the abandonment of error. But he baptized in *water,* which is the cleansing of the *external* man. It is the external that he dealt with principally, with certain glimpses of spiritual possibilities. You remember he gave us

[1] Matt. xi. 3 and context 2–19; Luke vii. 18–35.

a wonderful glimpse of the difference between himself and the man whose coming he prophesied, who, he said, was so far above him that he was not worthy to unloose his shoe, was not worthy to perform the slightest and most menial service for him: "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." [1]

The methods of one are material, of the other spiritual, even unto absolute perfection. It seems to me that here at least is a key to the situation, something that suggests the answer to the question: "Why did this brilliant light go out?" It went out because such is the character of all external things. John was teaching of the external man, of the material man, and of material things, and from the third chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation, we shall find that it is the destiny of materiality ultimately to disappear. As Jesus said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," drawing distinctly and definitely the line between the two, materiality and spirituality.

You remember when Jesus talked to the multitudes concerning John, just after he had answered the questions of the disciples whom John had sent to him, he

[1] Luke iii. 16.

said: "What went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."[1] Jesus thus defines, you see, the character of John's preaching, the character of John's service in opening the way, making the path for the coming of the great light of truth. But because his preaching was more on a material plane, it was inevitable that John the Baptist should decline, that his light should grow dim. We now return to our subject of this chapter:

"After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

"And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

"For John was not yet cast into prison.

[1] Matt. xi. 8–11. The reading of the Greek is, "he that is *lesser*," while the Revised Version renders it, "yet he that is *but little* in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

"Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

"And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

"John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven."

John's answer contains a wonderful truth. As I understand it, heaven stands here as a type of the source of truth; and according to the popular thought of that time, heaven was the abode of God Himself. Thus man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven, or from God, the Father. Some say that all truth comes from within ourselves, and this idea is confirmed by Jesus' own words: "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you."[1]

It was Paul who said that "the gift of God is eternal life."[2] And is it not true that the gift of God is the spiritual being which is within you? I would go farther than that and say this spiritual being constitutes you, *is you.* And is it not from heaven and is it not eternal? Indeed it is! Turn back again to those words already quoted: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God.*" What we are then, is from God; and that spiritual being that we recognize as our-

[1] Luke xvii. 21. [2] Romans vi. 23.

selves, and which we also recognize as coming from God, is the first of all great gifts which we receive from Him. And whatever of good we have, whether it be of spiritual or earthly things, is from God. Thus all that we are, and all that we have, is of Him. Then John reverts to himself as he makes this statement:

"Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.
"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled."

The joy is to the bridegroom, but John was not the bridegroom; he was the friend who rejoiced in the bridegroom. Jesus himself uses the same metaphor later on. And then comes John's prophecy with regard to his own career.

"He must increase, but I must decrease."

In this statement John predicts his own fate, recognizing the ultimate fulfillment of his mission, and his abdication as it were, upon the advent of the Christ. He realized more or less dimly, that the things that he taught were important, yet, that there was to be something greater than these which would fill, not the earth merely, but the universe. And so he eulogizes the Christ:

"He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all."

And you recall Jesus' statement but recently discussed, "No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." John thus recognized, you see, the distinction which existed between himself and his own career, and that of Jesus, the Christ. Jesus was from above, from heaven, as John said, and taught the things of the spirit; John, as he looked upon himself, was of the earth and taught the things of the earth. And as all earthly things must disappear, so John foresaw his own fate.

"And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony."

In other words, Jesus testifies to the truths which he has recognized but no one accepts his testimony regarding these things. No man hath seen God Himself. The Christ was the supreme revelation to tell us about God, yet no one received his testimony. How far do we even now recognize and accept the spiritual teachings of Jesus? How far do we follow even those precepts relating to the things of the world? And how much less do we follow him in the deeper and higher ways of his spiritual teachings? Who among

us can say that he loves his enemies? Who can say in response to that new commandment, that we have loved one another even as Jesus has loved us? How did he love his disciples? How does he love us? He told us,—"As the Father hath loved me, *so* have I loved you." Do we love one another in that way? Have we even reached a conception of such love?

"He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true."

The rendering of the Revised Version for this passage reads: "He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true." He that hath received the testimony of the Christ hath set his seal to the statement that God is true; he hath recognized that great declaration that God is good, and good alone; that He is not a God of wrath, nor merely of justice. When men *really* believe that God is good, the whole face of the earth will be changed. Take that humble statement of the poet Whittier, and apply it right here in your thoughts of the goodness of God: "Nothing can be good in Him which evil is in me."[1] And yet, we have talked of His jealousy and envy, His wrath and vengeance, and have ascribed to Him all the evils that pertain to humanity, and have called them good in Him.

[1] *The Eternal Goodness.*

But that is not the teaching of Jesus the Christ. The teaching of Jesus with regard to God is squarely contradictory to all that sort of thing. According to his teaching, *God is good,* without any mixture of evil whatsoever. And he that has received the testimony of Jesus, has had at least some recognition of this as a fact. When we study Jesus' words and take them in the simple way in which they were uttered, with their clearness of form and expression, and without the addition of anything whatsoever; when, with the faith of the little child, we accept them as they are, unclouded by any preconceived ideas; *then* shall we understand; and we shall understand with that spiritual perception which is greater than all imagination and which is above all argument or reasoning. We shall know the truth, with that illumination, that glorification, which shall convince us that Jesus did indeed speak the words of God, the Father. As John goes on to say:

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure.[1]
"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand."

The Son whom God hath sent speaks the truth of

[1] The Revised Version omits the words "unto him" at the close of this verse. They are in italics in the King James Version, signifying that they have been inserted.

God. This he is able to do because he has received of the Spirit of truth to an unlimited degree. That is, the Source of all wisdom and understanding from which he may draw is without limitation, is indeed infinite. God, the Father, loves the Son, and He gives freely to every child of His. Not only of the Spirit has He given, but *all things* without stint and without measure. This relates to each one of us, for each is a Son of God; each is a spiritual being. And unto each of us, if we will but exclude from our minds all erroneous thoughts, will come the spiritual understanding that shall perceive the truth. Then, with this glorified understanding, we can say as Jesus said, "All things that are mine are Thine"; recognizing this first to the extent that there is no "*mine*" in the sense of mere selfish or personal possession, then shall we see that the other half of the statement is also true, "*And Thine are mine.*"[1] Thus will we realize that in the truth there is neither mine nor thine. But in the attempt to get what we call "mine," and to hold on to it, this fact is hidden from our vision. John concludes:

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

[1] John xvii. 10. Revised Version.

The Greek reads: "He that believeth on the Son has eternal life, but he who disobeys the Son shall not see life." The passage may be interpreted to read thus: He that believeth in the Christ, or in the spiritual being, Son of God, hath recognized eternal life, but he not so believing hath not entered into eternal life merely through lack of recognition of it.

We are to notice here that it is John the Baptist who speaks of "the wrath of God." One man, and one man alone of all men, taught the truth, and only the truth, and that man was Jesus the Christ. And he never uttered a word of this kind. We may search all his sayings and never find him alluding to the wrath of God. It is not in his teaching, either in word or spirit. But it is in the teaching of others. It was in the thought as you see of John the Baptist, but it was an erroneous thought. We know, and our knowledge is based on the soundest philosophy, that *God is Infinite.* When we say that He is Infinite, we mean that He is limitless, *without limitation in any direction;* that is the meaning of the word "infinite." And if He is without limit, then there must be only Himself to be angry with, and the idea is inconceivable.

So the mission of John the Baptist was a restricted one because he failed of complete understanding of the truth. But what is the course of Jesus?

"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

"(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

"He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee."

The moment Jesus recognized the possibility of rivalry existing between himself and John, he went away. Jesus knew that no good comes out of the spirit of rivalry. We hear no more about John the Baptist, and except in this place we hear no more about baptism from Jesus. John the Baptist stands as a type of the course of action in each human mind. We begin as did he with obedience to the law, we begin with attention to the external things, with the thoughts of the affairs of this world and of bettering them; that is the beginning every time.

But with the teaching of Jesus as our guide, we may advance to the recognition of the truly spiritual things; to the recognition of the truth as he taught it. That indeed, is the truth of God. Thus we may progress until our whole life is not only illuminated by His truth, but we may attain to the point where our life is itself an illumination. It is to the study of this truth that we are to address ourselves as we now go forward in the Book of John.

X

THE CONVERSATION WITH THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

(John IV. 3–42)

Jesus did not wait for a large audience; whether there was but one or a multitude to listen to his teaching seemed to make no difference with him regarding the importance or the character of the instruction which he offered. Twice, according to the records, he had simply an audience of one, and on each of these occasions he gives us some of his greatest truths. These two instances as well as his teaching on these occasions stand in curious contrast. One of his auditors, a man; the other, a woman. One, a scholar, learned in all the affairs of his nation; the other unlettered, a rustic. One a teacher, a master, a leader; the other a humble person, without pretense, position, or influence. The conversation in each case was adapted to the intelligence of the listener. Presuming on the knowledge and understanding of the scholar, Jesus began by announcing a great spiritual truth: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." On the other occasion, recognizing the woman's ignorance, or mental limitations, perceiving that she pretended to little attainment, he began, not

with an announcement, but with a simple request, asking for a drink of the water at the well. This contrast may be noticed throughout the two interviews; the scholar not understanding the meaning of Jesus' words; the humble peasant gleaning somewhat at least of an understanding of what Jesus said to her; the man of affairs, the leader, coming alone to Jesus by night; the woman, unlettered and unpretentious, afterwards bringing many from the city to listen to his teaching. Let us read the introduction to the story:

"He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.
"And he must needs go through Samaria.
"Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.
"Now Jacob's well (spring—Greek) was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well; and it was about the sixth hour."

They had traveled all the morning no doubt and probably on foot, so Jesus was resting there by the well. This historic spot is one of the few places of importance referred to in the Gospels the identity of which is not disputed. They would show us Jacob's well now, if we were to go there to-day, and I imagine this well to be the identical place where Jesus rested.

"There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water; Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink."

We see nothing in this of particular importance. Jesus was there presumably alone, his disciples having gone away to the city to buy food, and he asked this woman who had come there for water, to give him a drink. It was a quite ordinary request, but the woman was surprised. Under the existing national conditions such a request caused her much amazement, and she says:

"How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."

The Samaritans were a people distinct from the Jews, though living in their midst. They were a mixed race, descendants of the remnant of Israel when the principal inhabitants were carried off, and of the Assyrians who were brought in to replace them.[1] The Jews accused them of continuing the idol worship of their ancestors. The Samaritan was publicly cursed in their synagogues and could not be brought as a witness in the Jewish courts. The Jews hated and despised them.

Thus the antagonism between the two nations at that time was quite marked. It is true that this antagonism was not so pronounced as it became at a later period, but it was enough so that it was a cause

[1] 2 Kings xvii. 6, 24.

of wonder to this woman that Jesus should ask her for a drink. More than this, it is probable that Jesus by his garb indicated that he was a teacher, a Rabbi. And etiquette among the Jews required that a Rabbi should not speak to a woman under any circumstances. This added to her surprise, but above all things, that a Jew should speak to a Samaritan indicated a different kind of Jew from any she had ever seen before.

Jesus, as you see, commenced the conversation with a request that would have been commonplace under any other circumstances. He is thirsty; he asks for water. But at once he enters upon the discussion of other and greater things. He says to her:

"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

Here is emphasized the keenness and the teaching ability of Jesus in deliberately comparing the water of the well,—something familiar to the woman's experience,—with the water of life. Jesus was constantly doing this, as, for example, in his remark to the fishermen, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Also when the crowds followed him for bread he gave them his great discourse on the bread of life. And again in this same chapter we are now consider-

ing (verse 32) when the disciples urged him to eat, he told them of food in a spiritual sense.

The water that he now speaks of to this woman at the well, is not the water that she shall give him out of her pitcher, but it is the living water that he shall give her,—the water of life. "If thou knewest the gift of God!" The gift of God is *life*, and Jesus would give to her this water of life, would give it freely. Her mental condition is very clearly indicated by her response. She does not understand what Jesus is talking about; she has not gone beyond the material thought of the water of the well.

"The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water?"

The well was deep, and she saw that Jesus had nothing to draw the water with. Probably she understood his expression of living water to mean the water of the spring that flowed naturally out of the earth, nothing more. Her mind had not risen to grasp the spiritual thought that he presented. In this question of hers she is as far from understanding the meaning of Jesus as Nicodemus had been in his questioning. To each Jesus expressed an idea in language they did not understand. Yet this woman of Samaria, claiming a common ancestry with the Jews, apparently

noticed something of superiority in Jesus, and she felt there was something in his thought beyond that of merely receiving the water from the well, for she says:

"Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?"

In other words: "Is he who produces this water that you speak of, greater than our great ancestor who built this well and gave it to us?" Like Nicodemus, she understands only from the material side of things and is talking solely from that viewpoint, whereas Jesus is distinctly referring to spiritual things and is trying to open her eyes to a perception of the truth, that she may have an understanding of the things that pertain to the spirit. Then, to this simple, unsophisticated woman standing there by him, does he present one of the greatest thoughts of all his teaching:

"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again;
"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."

Whosoever partaketh of earthly things shall continue to desire earthly things and to desire them more and more, but whosoever drinketh of the water of truth is forever satisfied. There is an overflowing sup-

ply of this living water of truth; it never diminishes but continues to increase. *Whosoever partaketh of truth shall never want.* But Jesus does not stop here, as he might have, for this promise is indeed a great one. In his next words he makes it even greater, even more wonderful.

"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water[1] springing up into everlasting life."

Jesus has completed his first declaration; he has characterized the two waters, one, the water of thirst which simply affords satisfaction for the moment, and then that satisfaction passes away; and the other, the water of truth which really quenches thirst and quenches it eternally. But more than that, this living water, in its marvelous character, becomes in the recipient "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Such simple language, such a complete grasp of the truth! "If thou knewest the gift of God"! What is the great gift of God but eternal life? What is the gift of God to each being but life, existence; that life, that existence, which, expressed by the Divine Being Himself, is bestowed upon each individual whom He has created.

All truth is from God. He is the one and only

[1] The Greek means, "a spring of water or a fountain."

source of truth. It is only from within that we perceive the truth, and that perception is the perception of the spiritual being, which is direct from God. Even that power to perceive is from Him and is given to us along with the gift of eternal life. We may well glory in the springing up from within of that truth which we have recognized, knowing that it has been given us by Him. And it is for us to see that our perception of the truth continually enlarges. The gifts that God has given to us are as the sands of the sea, they are numberless, they are unlimited, and we shall go on and on in the discovery of them forever.

See how Jesus tries to give this truth to this unrecognizing woman, who, as her response shows, did not comprehend any more than did Nicodemus. She did not know what he was talking about. She had not even the recognition of her own spiritual being. The seed was sown on the rock and seemingly there was no soil for it to take root. Yet the sower sows in all places and under all circumstances.

"The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

Jesus had told her, that had she asked of him, he would have given her living water. Now she says, "Give me this water." Has she indeed received a glimpse of the truth? But we see in her concluding

words here that she has not advanced beyond the material thought that she need not come any more to this place to draw water. She was to all appearances blind to the light that shone all about her. May there not have come to Jesus at this point in the conversation somewhat at least of disappointment? Was she totally ignorant? Had he cast his pearls before swine? But Jesus has undertaken to explain something and so he comes down from the heights he had occupied to her plane, just where he started when he asked her for water to drink. He says to her:

"Go, call thy husband, and come hither."

Here are words that she can understand, and evidently there was something in his manner and tone of voice, as well as in his speech, that caused her to be thoughtful, and that made her have faith in him and realize at last that he was talking of spiritual truths. And so she answers him:

"I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:
"For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."

Ah, here at last, is something within her comprehension; here is to her a wonderful revelation; this is convincing where the words of spiritual truth had made

no impression on her. Immediately this strange man rises in her estimation. Jesus' knowledge of her past affected her more than anything else. As with this woman, so frequently it is from interest in less important matters that the minds of many are aroused to perceive the greater truths. When Jesus first spoke to her she saw that he was not of the usual type of men in her country, nor was he like the other Jews that she had met or heard of. Now she recognizes something superior in him, and she says unto him:

"Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet."

His knowledge of her history, of certain facts in her life which no one could have told him, proved to her his greatness, and the best title she could give him was that of prophet. And straightway she resorted to one of the burning questions of the day between the Samaritans and the Jews. Here is this Jew before her, who knew all about her own life; he could decide this question. So she says to him, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain;"—they were then at the foot of the great mountain of Samaria where the Samaritan temple probably was at that time.

"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

See on what infinitesimal things thought is sometimes divided. The *place* to worship was a much-debated question at that particular time. The Jews held that worship could not properly be conducted anywhere outside of the temple of Jerusalem. The Samaritans maintained that the only place of true worship was on the mountain. To both, this question was very important because they saw underneath it all the one great necessity,—that God should be worshipped as He ought to be worshipped. And the woman, having seen that this stranger is much more than an ordinary man, seeks the decision of this question.

Jesus has at last touched a responsive chord in her mind; he has roused her to thinking along the ordinary religious lines of that day. But how little real religion was there as compared with the things that Jesus had been telling her! She had indicated that she thought him a prophet, and he continues in the line of prophecy in answer to her question.

"Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father."

The Samaritan held to his place of worship even more tenaciously than the Jew to his. As for the Jew, his temple disappeared within a generation; but the mountain of the Samaritan still stands. It is true

that there is yet a handful, something like a score or so of Samaritans who still worship on that mountain, amid the ruins of what was once their temple, the last survival of the old Samaritan religion.

But now, according to the words of this man, this idea of the necessity of a particular spot for worship, which held so dominant a position in their religion, was to be swept away completely. What a shock this must have been to the woman! Here was a Jew who at once denied that a *place* of worship was an essential of religion. Jesus continues:

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

"*In spirit and in truth.*" Where is this spirit, where this truth? Is it on this mountain that they were gazing upon? Is it in the temple at Jerusalem? Is it in any one spot more than another? The essential of each life is spirit. As Jesus said later, "The kingdom of God is *within* you." Thus the place for worship is within yourself, wherever *you* may happen to be. This is the one true place for worship, and there is no other. Whether you are in the most magnificent temple that was ever set apart for that purpose, as the temple at Jerusalem had been set apart, or whether in the woods, or fields, or in the busy streets of the

city; whether in the silence of the night, or the confusion of the crowd by day; wherever you may be, *there* is the place for worship,—in spirit and in truth. And this is the divine worship which God, the Father asks,—in the temple of the living God within yourself.

What a wonderful answer to the woman's question, embodying, as it does, an absolute truth, and in such simple language that any one can understand! But even though the climax seems to have been already reached, Jesus in his next words goes further still and continues with greater significance and deeper truth:

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

I prefer the rendering of the Revised Version: "*God is Spirit;* and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Therefore the true worship needs not the ornaments of architecture; it needs not the solemnly dedicated building, neither the aid of music, nor yet the hymn of praise; it needs not the words of the speaker nor anything but the recognition of your own divine self and thankfulness to the Giver of that self, to the Giver of all. The suggestiveness of this idea is so great that it is beyond words, almost even beyond thought. When you have entered the retired place of yourself and closed the door of that self

against all outward things, then are you in the fittest place for worship, the temple not made with hands. Here alone is the place for true worship, worship that shall be indeed "in spirit and in truth."[1] Yet the woman does not understand Jesus' meaning; her bewilderment increases, and she responds:

"I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things."

Then Jesus says what he did not reveal unto Nicodemus, what he did not announce directly to the Jews nor to the Gentiles:

"I that speak unto thee am he."

Thus ends this most impressive conversation.

"And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman; yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?"

I have already referred to the reason for this. Jesus was a teacher as well as a Jew, and such were not supposed to talk with the Samaritans, except possibly in relation to the ordinary affairs of life. But in some way or another the woman was interested; she felt that she had been listening to a wonderful man, and she seems to have forgotten why she had come to the

[1] *Ask and Receive,* Chapter II, "How to Pray."

well because she goes back to the city without even taking the vessel she had brought to carry the water in, for the story goes on to say:

"The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,
"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?
"Then they went out of the city, and came unto him."

We can imagine her earnestness as she tells her news to them. She recognized that her life was laid open before this man and, as her last declaration to Jesus shows, she had some sort of idea that this might be the Christ that was to come.

"In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat."

Hungry and thirsty he had come there to eat.

"But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

What food had he had to eat? Only the food that he offered to that woman and that he offers to us, *spiritual food.* This spiritual food he offers to the whole world, and the world should be ready to receive it at all times and thus grow in the perception and understanding of God's truth.

"Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat?

"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish (accomplish—R. V.) His work."

While he had been giving to this woman in her ignorance, he, himself, had been partaking of the food of eternal life. He apparently did not wish them to give so much thought to merely material food and drink, and he took this opportunity to remind them that they should give *more* thought to the spiritual food which is life itself.

We have here two examples of Jesus' method of teaching that are strikingly parallel. Jesus was thirsty; he asked for water and seized the opportunity to speak of spiritual water: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." In the second instance the disciples offered food. Jesus immediately tells them of spiritual food.

This principle of teaching,—beginning with the known and familiar and from this advancing to the unknown is well recognized in pedagogy. Jesus constantly employed it. How homely are his illustrations! He speaks of farming and shepherds, of mending, and sweeping. He knows the value of object lessons.

"Show me a penny," was his answer on one occasion.[1] At once interest is aroused and attention gained. Again, he took a little child and set in the midst of them, to emphasize what he had to say. If we were to translate some of Jesus' sayings into terms of our modern life we would realize how much use he made of every-day experiences.

"And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

"So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them; and he abode there two days."

Thus Jesus stayed in a Samaritan city with Samaritans; he never let an opportunity escape to scatter the seed wherever it might chance to take root. So this simple-minded woman has come into prominence. She brought people to listen to Jesus. She, at least, did what she could.

"And many more believed because of his own word;

"And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

[1] Luke xx. 24.

XI

THE FATHER AND THE SON
(John V. 1–31)

THERE was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went to Jerusalem. At Bethesda he saw a multitude of people waiting to be healed by the moving of the water, for according to the faith of the people, whoever stepped first into the moving water was healed of whatever infirmity he had. And a man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years, and Jesus said unto him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" The man answered him that he had no one to put him into the water. "Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked; and on the same day was the Sabbath." If there was any one requirement of the law about which the Jews were especially particular, it was the observance of the Sabbath.

"The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

"He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

"Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

"And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

"Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

"The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

"And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day."

Then follows Jesus' reply to the charges made against him regarding his violation of the Sabbath. It is more than a mere defense. He here sets forth in masterly fashion the wonderful relationship between the Father and the Son. Answering his enemies he says:

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Note particularly the personal character of this statement as contrasted with the others which follow. Jesus is here speaking of himself and the Father. This is his defense. "My Father worketh hitherto," or, as in the Revised Version, "My Father worketh even until now,"—an intimation that the Father Himself works on the Sabbath day,—and because of that, "I work also." As Jesus said on another occasion when

he healed the blind man, "I must work the works of Him that sent me." He works the works of righteousness, revealing thus the works of the Father on the Sabbath day or on any day.

And here in this instance is an example of the unexpected reaction of the people to Jesus' teaching, namely, the way in which his work was received by those who witnessed it, or who heard his words. To us it would seem that the healing of a man who for thirty-eight years had been an invalid, was of such importance, such accomplishment of good, as to outweigh completely any thought of a violation of the sanctity of the Sabbath. But with the Jews at that time, the violation of the Sabbath was the one great offense, and thus we see that the work which Jesus did was entirely overshadowed by the fact that the Sabbath law had been violated. Even to carry one's mattress on that day was considered by them as a violation of the law. They paid no attention to the declaration of Jesus that the "Father worketh hitherto." From their point of view, the paramount thing was the violation of the Sabbath; they overlooked entirely the good that had been done.

"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

To make himself equal with God, as his words implied, was another offense which they could not forgive, and in view of this, the miracle of healing which he had done passed completely out of sight. A similar thing was frequently noticeable even with the disciples, when Jesus was talking to them; perhaps nowhere else so marked as in the conversation at the close of the Last Supper. Jesus was telling them of great truths but they persisted in confining their minds to little things, or to matters of far less importance.

Then Jesus begins his talk regarding the relationship of the Father and the Son, but here the distinctly personal note ends, for he speaks no more of himself exclusively, until at the close of his words relating to the Father and the Son, when he says, "If *I* bear witness of *myself,* my witness is not true." He here shows that these preceding verses[1] refer not to himself alone as has been generally understood. That is, they do not refer specifically to Jesus to the exclusion of others, but they do refer to all mankind.

"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you,[2] The Son can do nothing of himself."

[1] John v. 19–29.

[2] The introduction used several times in this chapter, and one which Jesus frequently uses, "Verily, verily, I say unto you" is intended to give emphasis to the words that are to follow and might read, "Truly, truly, I say unto you." Or, as sometimes translated, "Indeed, I truly say to you"; "indeed, I assure you."

Our understanding of what follows depends on our interpretation of the expression: "*the Son.*" If Jesus were here speaking of himself only, he would naturally say, "I can do nothing of myself," as he does later in verse thirty, where, referring to himself alone, he uses the words, "I can of mine own self do nothing." But he says, "I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself." Whom does he mean by "the Son"? Let us go back and review for a moment some of the things that are said in the first chapter of this Gospel of John.

"All things were made by Him (God—the Logos); and without Him was not anything made. That which hath been made was life in Him; and the life was the light of men.[1]

"And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended[2] it not.

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God."

This Light lighteth every man that is born, and to those who receive this Light with understanding, is given the power to manifest themselves as the sons of God, or in other words, to such is given the power to show that they *are* the sons of God. The first part

[1] This is the rendering given in the Revised Version, Margin.
[2] "Apprehended" or "overcame" in the Revised Version.

of the Book of John describes the spiritual creation, and man, the spiritual being, "Son of God." And this applies to every one. No matter what appearance we may present to the external world, the essential of us, of each human being, is the spiritual being, the Son of God.

This spiritual being, in a way we can scarcely comprehend, receives from God life, and the power to *be* the Son of God, or, to reveal himself as the Son of God. For these "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God.*" And so in the beginning of that prayer which Jesus gave us, he tells us to say, "*Our Father.*" And if we say "Our Father," then may we also say that we are His children, the sons of God. And this is Jesus' testimony throughout the whole of his teaching: "your Father," "my Father," "our Father,"—always recognizing that men are the sons of God. Indeed this is one of the great essentials of his teaching, and if we would accept it in its fullest meaning, our understanding of ourselves would be entirely different from what it is now. As he said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." That which is born of God is spirit, and it is the spiritual being in every man that is "*the Son.*"

Does this then mean Jesus the Christ? Indeed it

does, but it also means you and me, it means every son of the Father. And so the words that follow are merely an exposition of this idea in its fullness and magnitude.

"The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (in like manner—R. V.).

The possibilities that lie in the assumption expressed in these words are beyond our farthest thought, and we shrink naturally from the sense of responsibility thus placed upon us. We, in our deep feeling of humility, say, "This does not mean me; it means some one else." But stop a moment. Who are you? And do you intentionally deny that you are a child of God? If you are not God's child, then Jesus does not mean you, but if you are His child he does mean you, and he thus takes you into the closest brotherhood with himself.

One noticeable peculiarity in Jesus' teaching is that he never in any place claims one thing for himself that he does not also grant to every other one of God's children. Among his later words to us in this same Gospel we find these, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do";[1]

[1] John xiv. 12.

and in that wonderful prayer in the seventeenth chapter of this Gospel, his words show us that the Father loves us even as the Father loves him.[1] If these words in the Bible are really true, then we are entitled to accept them to the fullest extent of their meaning, for we too, are sons. The difficulty is that we *say* that God is our Father without the remotest thought of what it really means *to be* His children. We call God, "Our Father" and immediately forget that if we have a right to use that title we have the same right to call ourselves His children and to accept for ourselves all that that signifies.

"For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that Himself doeth."

The Father loves you and me, and He hath not hidden one thing of all His doings, not one thing in all creation is hidden from us. The Father showeth the Son,—not the external man of the earth but the spiritual Son of Himself,—all things that He Himself doeth. Indeed, the whole of God's beautiful creation lies before us like an open book. We have but to use our spiritual comprehension, our spiritual perception, and recognize these truths.

"And He will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel."

[1] John xvii. 23.

No limitation whatever is put upon us or upon the power that is given to the Son. We may well stand in awe of ourselves and marvel exceedingly, as greater and still greater works are revealed unto us,—the children of God.

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

The literal meaning of this according to the Greek is: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and doth make them alive; even so the Son doth make alive whom he will." We have progressed in these later years far beyond the ideas of fifty or a hundred years ago, but look at this now and think of the meaning these words are intended to convey to us. How many are there among us who really believe them as they stand? *"Even so the Son makes alive whom he will."* Here, as always, Jesus' statement is without limitation. It refers to Jesus, the Christ? Yes, and it refers as well to the Christ in you and in me. For it was the Christ in Jesus who did the great works, and if we are to do the works of the Father, they must be done by the Christ in ourselves, by the spiritual being of ourselves. But we must believe that there is but *one* power, and that that power is of God and is *unlimited.* And as each one of God's children is of His substance, so that power worketh in and through them according

as they will or choose to use it. This philosophy stands behind every one of these statements of Jesus and is irrefutable. We go to the Father, the Infinite God, to learn what He is, and learning what He is, we learn what we ourselves are.

Let us turn to the next verse. Tremendous statements of sublime truths Jesus is giving to these men who are seeking to kill him. He is showing them things hidden and unknown to them, just as they are unknown to so many of us. He has said, "The Father loveth the Son," now he says:

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."

A little closer rendering of the original Greek is: "For not even the Father judgeth any one, but has given all judgment to the Son." Men have said that this means that all judgment is committed unto Jesus, but Jesus himself says, "*I* judge *no man*." These words here do not refer exclusively to him but they do refer to each individual. We *are* judges, not judges of ourselves nor of others, but of the *things* of ourselves. For we must not lose sight of the fact that it is not *man* who is to be judged, but the *errors* of man.

In our judgment of the things of ourselves we should recognize the power of *choice* which we possess,—the power to choose between good and evil, between

right and wrong. If we look back over our lives and see where we have changed our opinions, where we have seen things we had not seen before, and have recognized the character of what we were doing, we see how we then judged our own actions and so put away the wrong doing. This is the judgment wherewith we are to judge.

"That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him."

This means that you should honor the divine in yourself even as you honor God Himself. For the divine in yourself is of Him. Honoring not your spiritual self, whatever your external appearance may be, is failure to honor the Father from whom that spirit comes. For the divine being within you is of the substance of God.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Who is it that hears the word of truth? The sense-man knows nothing of God, for our senses can tell us not one thing, even the remotest regarding God. They hear not the spiritual word. Jesus said at one time to the people gathered about him, "Why do ye not un-

derstand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word." They were hearing his words with the ear only, as we hear words without understanding. But it is the spirit that hears the spiritual message, the spirit that discerns the spirit. It is the spirit of truth in every one that listens to the word of truth from whatever source it may come.

Who is it that believes in God? It certainly is not the external man, for that man knows nothing of Him. It is this spiritual being within us that recognizes God, and it is this spiritual being that "hath everlasting life." Such shall not come into condemnation (or judgment), but pass from death into life. Or, as given in the Revised Version, "Hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

"They that hear shall live." There is no exception, even the seemingly dead who "hear the voice of the Son of God,"—the voice of the inner spirit,—*they shall live.* Here is taught a wonderful immortality.

"For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in himself."

The rendering of the Revised Version is perhaps a little more emphatic: "As the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in himself." This brings us back, you see, to that statement in the first chapter of John, only in a different form,—" That which hath been made was life in Him." Then continuing, Jesus refers again to the question of judgment by the Son:

" And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.[1]

" Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, (the voice of the Son of man, which is the spiritual being).

" And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (or judgment).

What a terror this word " damnation " has been to the world, and how we have shrunk from it! How many have shivered beneath the denunciations heaped upon them because of this language! And yet a simple explanation would change it into a most glorious prophecy. This is an accurate statement of an indisputable fact. In the first place it will be well to understand that the word *" judgment "* is nearer to

[1] " Because he is *a* Son of man " is the rendering of the Revised Version, Margin.

the meaning of the original Greek than the word "damnation," and is so translated in the Revised Version and elsewhere.

As has already been shown, it is the Son who judges the things of himself, rejecting the evil. He rejects the error in himself, and is himself the judge of that which concerns himself. He thus "comes forth unto the resurrection of life." Jesus speaks of *all* men as sons, and it is not the Father who judges, but all men are judges of themselves; each judging the things of his own life, rejecting the evil and retaining the good, unto life eternal. The spirit lives eternally, for spirit is of God; and all life is of God and therefore cannot die.

Then Jesus refers to himself alone in this most beautiful passage, which we can each apply to ourselves and strive for the attainment of all that it suggests:

"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just (righteous—R. V.); because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

In the remainder of the chapter Jesus becomes distinctly personal, defending himself from the charges of the Jews and remonstrating with his hearers because of their unbelief, and their lack of understanding of the truth. In his defense of himself he says:

"The works which the Father hath given me to finish, (accomplish—R. V.) the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

"And the Father Himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.[1]

"And ye have not His word abiding in you: for whom He hath sent, him ye believe not."

They did not have God's truth abiding in their hearts. These men,—his persecutors,—did not believe in him, neither did they recognize that this great claim which Jesus made, regarding the Father and the Son, was for each of them as it is for all men.

There is nothing anywhere else that portrays more clearly the real character of the Son and the real relationship of the Son to the Father, than this talk of Jesus to the Jews. Yet it is all embodied in that one petition, "*Our Father.*"

[1] Sometimes translated, "form" or "appearance."

XII

THE BREAD OF LIFE FROM HEAVEN
(John VI.)

The incidents which led up to the conversation that we are to consider in this chapter are perfectly natural on account of the miracles Jesus had performed. A great multitude followed him because of these miracles and because of the things he said to them. Jesus went up into a mountain with his disciples, and the people came unto him there; a great company, as many as five thousand the record says. And when Jesus saw the numbers, a discussion arose as to how they should be fed, and Philip suggested that two hundred penny-worth of bread would not be sufficient for such a multitude. Andrew, one of the disciples, said:

"There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"

Then Jesus had them to sit on the grass, and he "took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down." When they were filled, they gathered up the fragments and there were twelve baskets full.

The men who had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." They recognized his wonderful power; they recognized his greatness; and they concluded that this man must be made their king. We must bear in mind that whenever anything of this sort took place, the idea of the Jews in relation to it was purely a materialistic one. According to their understanding, their Messiah was to come and rule over Israel as a king, restoring to the nation the glories of David and of Solomon.

When Jesus therefore perceived that they would make him king, he departed to a mountain by himself alone. We often refer to the temptation in the wilderness, and to the temptation in the Garden, but he really was under a continual temptation; he was seldom, if ever, free from it. Here were these people who had recognized somewhat of the truth, although they were apt to mix with it some of their own erroneous views and thus get into frequent mistakes, as in this instance, when they deemed it possible to make of him an earthly sovereign. Such was their great misunderstanding of Jesus and of his work! As we find in another record of the event, he sent his disciples away in a boat across the lake, that he himself might go alone up into a mountain to pray. We can conceive how the thought of being made king might

have some possible weight with Jesus, because of the larger opportunity that thus would be given him for using his power to make the world better. He might well feel that such an opportunity was one not to be lightly rejected. And it was not necessary for Jesus to do anything himself to become king, he had only to let others do, and abide by their acts.

The record goes on to say, that when the evening was come, his disciples went down to the sea, and entered a ship and went towards Capernaum. It was now dark and Jesus had not yet returned to them. The sea arose and a great wind blew. They had rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs when they saw Jesus coming towards them, walking on the sea, and they were afraid. They thought it was a spirit, and they cried out in their fear. But Jesus spoke, saying unto them:

"It is I; be not afraid."

And in Matthew where we find an account of the same incident, the record states that "straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; (or, be of good courage) it is I; be not afraid."[1] This appears here as a purely personal remark, but to me it has a deeper significance, a larger meaning, than we ordinarily look for in the merely personal "I." If we

[1] Matt. xiv. 27.

turn to the original Greek, we find it reads, "I am; fear you not"; or, "I am; be not afraid." How many times even in a single day we ourselves use the expressions, "I" or "I am"! We use them so often that we think of them as referring merely to our material selves, but it is the spiritual self that these words stand for and it is the spiritual self of us that we really mean whenever we utter them whether or not we realize it. Whenever we speak these words we thus unconsciously express our relation to the Infinite Father.[1] And so Jesus said, "Be of good cheer, be of good courage; I am, fear not."

"Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went."

The following day the people on the other side of the sea came across seeking Jesus.

"And when they had found him, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?"

They were following this man who fed them in such a miraculous way, yet they asked him the most trivial of questions, "When camest thou hither?" This introduces a conversation which is of great value. Jesus did not answer their question; it was too unimportant.

[1] See Chapter XVI, pages 238–241.

He recognizes that these people are purely materialistic. Their hunger had been satisfied, and they followed him across the sea. His reply to them seems almost like a reprimand:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

"Labor (work—R. V.) not for the meat[1] which perisheth,[1] but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed."[1]

It was the meat that perisheth that they were seeking; it was mainly because of external appearances that they followed Jesus. He tells them not to work for that which perisheth but for that which perisheth not. There is a vast difference between that which comes to nothing, and that which endures forever. One satisfies for a moment and the other satisfies forever, and yet he calls both "*meat,*" meaning material food and spiritual food. Is not this another instance of Jesus' method? I believe he intentionally here repeats the word "meat" merely to emphasize the contrast. Thus we are to work for that which endures unto eternal life, which the Son of man, the spiritual being, shall

[1] "Food" would be a more accurate rendering of the Greek than "meat." The word "perisheth" as used here means "that which is not permanent," or, in the last analysis, "that which is destroyed." "Sealed" means, "to seal, to confirm; to set the seal of approval on."

give unto us; "for him hath God the Father set the seal of His approval on."

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might (may—R. V.) work the works of God?

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom He hath sent."

In other words, you are to believe in this Son of man whom God hath created or hath sent into the world. Since the beginning of the Christian era mankind has laid great stress on "*belief,*" and here is a place where people particularly emphasize it. Yet it seems to me that they have not quite reached the point of meaning which Jesus intended.

We act in accordance with what we believe. As our thinking is, so are our actions, and belief is a phase of thinking. If we really believe in the Son,—the spiritual being, child of God,—as defined in the previous chapter, if we really believe in the essential of ourselves, and *know* that we are spirit, how different then will our actions be! We shall then believe that our spiritual being does not depend on earthly things, does not depend in anywise on materiality. When we really believe these things how much we shall leave alone that now we do; how much will pass out of our thoughts that we now think! Furthermore, how much will come into our thoughts, into our recognition, that

now we do not dream of! To *believe* the truth means to *do* the truth. We say we believe; indeed we have much to say about belief, but we say it with our lips and we then go and do otherwise. This is proof that our statement of belief was not sincere even though we thought it so when we voiced it.

"That ye believe on him whom God hath sent." Whom hath the Father sent? *The Son!* Just as we had it in the previous chapter: "For the Father judgeth no man, but *hath committed all judgment unto the Son;* that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." And you remember from our study of those words of John,—"That which hath been made was life in Him,"—that your life is of the life of God, and that you are, just as Jesus said, a *son,* a *child,* and so have the right to say "*Our* Father." Then look for a moment at your own belief, at your own actions. Not at what you *say* you believe, but at what you *really* believe. Turn to the within of yourself and contemplate for an instant what you would do if you *actually* believed in the reality of this relationship, and in all that it means. True belief is of the first importance because action follows belief.

But the people were loth to understand Jesus, just as were Nicodemus and the woman at the well. They asked for a sign from himself before they would believe. For they said unto him:

"What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

"Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

This was a sign, one they could believe in, so "What do *you* do?" is the question that they pressed upon Jesus. And the answer that Jesus gives is in line with what he had already said with regard to that food which endureth unto eternal life.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."

The rendering of the Revised Version reads a bit differently: "It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven." The manna was food of the earth, the materialistic bread; it was not food from heaven. And so Jesus continues:

"For the bread of God is he (*that*—R. V.) which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

The spiritual bread, or the true food, is that which descends from heaven, giving life unto the world. And like the woman at the well, when told of the living water, so these people said to him:

"Lord, evermore give us this bread."

Some glimmering of the truth has entered their minds. And accordingly they ask for this bread of heaven that gives life unto the world. So Jesus answered them and said:

"I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

I believe that Jesus in these words is not referring to himself personally; he does not mean that at all. But what he does refer to is the Eternal Presence, and that spiritual, divine being dwelling within himself, which is the Christ, the Son of the Infinite God. Jesus in all that he says seldom refers to himself personally. When he says, "I am the bread of life," he utters the words in the same impersonal way as when he said, "Be of good cheer; I am, fear not."

There is neither hunger nor thirst in the spirit. We may refer here to the beatitude: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Also to the reply of Jesus to his disciples at the well, when they came wondering why he did not eat, and if any man had given him to eat,—"I have meat to eat that ye know not of." So here, in this place, Jesus speaks of that food that the world knows not of. Pure spirit is the bread of life.

As all that exists is of God's life; so the true or spiritual bread is of His own life. Jesus continues:

"But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not."

Here we turn again to the materialistic side of things. They had seen him as we see each other, and they had eaten of the miraculously prepared food, and yet they did not understand. That is, they had seen his works without understanding, and therefore they did not believe. And so they came with all these trivial questions.

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.
"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.
"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

"Of all that the Father gives me, I shall lose nothing." What has the Father given him? In Jesus' own words in the eleventh chapter of Matthew we read: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." *"All things,"* and there is no indication of any limitation whatsoever. And so Jesus says here in words that are a little closer to the Greek: "Whatever the Father gives me will come to me." "And

this is the will of Him who sent me, that I may lose nothing of all that He has given me, but may raise it up at the last day."

The Father has given him all that is; He has given him all that is of the spirit, for this in particular relates to the spiritual, and nothing of that can be lost. As we have learned from John's own words in this Gospel, *all* that has been made was of the very life of the Father. And if anything of that can be lost, then God Himself can be destroyed. If one least atom of life disappears, then God is no longer infinite, He is no longer God. But, *this is the Father's will,* that of all that He has given me *I shall lose nothing,* but shall raise it up again at the last day. And then Jesus continues, with an even deeper, clearer meaning:

"And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Which interpreted means: This is the will of God, that *every one* who recognizes and believes in the Son, the spiritual being, shall come into the consciousness of eternal life; and at the last day, when all error or evil is overcome, he shall be raised up, that is, he shall stand forth as he is,—God's true child, made in His image and likeness and manifesting himself as such.

We may call this a wonderful promise but it is far more than that. It is the statement of an absolute principle, of a scientific truth. Oh, the terror of that idea of the "last day"! And why? What is the last day? It but refers to the death of materiality, to the end of all error. Each day that we see more and more clearly and believe more distinctly and definitely in the truth, we are ourselves putting away error or all untruth, putting it out of our lives and bidding it depart forever. And finally there will come a last day when we shall put away the last error, and when even the recognition or thought of evil shall disappear entirely. It, in all of its forms, will be abolished completely,—no more suffering, no more sorrow, all difficulties, all troubles vanished forever. What a glory to contemplate, that such a time is coming, when we shall stand forth as we are, sons, children of God; when we shall see one another as we really are,—true spiritual beings!

"The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

"And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?"

They evidently saw only the surface of things and did not at all understand what he was talking about. But Jesus continues:

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

No one can come unless the Father draws him. Whom does the Father draw to Himself but the spiritual being that you are? Him the Father draws unto Himself. We have jumped to the conclusion in the past that there were some that the Father did not draw to Himself. But what does it say?

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God."[1]

"They shall *all* be taught of God." Taught the truth! And as we know and recognize the truth, so are we drawn by the truth. As we know and recognize the good, we are drawn by the good. Who is it that is satisfied with his present condition? Every man that ever lived is seeking something which shall be an improvement on what he now has. He may be mistaken, perhaps, but the impulse behind it all is the desire for something better. The Father is drawing him towards higher and better things. And so it is with every man. As you reach your ideal, other and more desirable things appear just ahead, and still more glorious ones in the distance, and so we press on continually, the Father always drawing towards the good until that

[1] The rendering of the Revised Version.

wondrous last day when He has drawn you away from all error and into the glory of the truth and the truth alone. And so the verse continues:

"Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

Every one that hears and learns of God comes to the Christ or believes in him.

"Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father."

Spirit alone sees spirit. The material man never sees spiritual things. These eyes of ours, these senses of ours, do not under any circumstances reveal to us one least little thing of God. *That* man never sees God; but the spiritual man, he that is of God, *he* hath seen the Father.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth (on me)[1] hath everlasting life.
"I am that bread of life."

Here again, you see, it is not the personal Jesus that is meant, but the spiritual man, the Christ.

[1] The Revised Version omits the words "on me," rendering the passage thus: "He that believeth hath eternal life. I am the bread of life."

"Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

"This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

"And the bread that I will give is my flesh." How seemingly gross this sounds! Yet it stands here as the reason for the dogma of one of our great churches. But what is flesh? What we see and speak of as flesh is but the shadow of the reality, that which stands for the substance, but is not the real thing. Flesh as we see and understand it is but materiality. Yet back of this, hidden from our erroneous vision, is the reality for which the flesh stands. This reality is spirit and that spirit is of the one substance with God, the Father. And we are nourished by that substance, that life. That life is in the plant and it is that which nourishes the plant. That life is in everything that exists, whether we recognize it or not, and frequently we do not recognize it because it is so often hidden by the sense perceptions. There is the One First Cause, and out of this is evolved all that is. Therefore, *in reality,* all that is, is spirit. And unless we partake of this spiritual food, there is no true life in us, as Jesus goes on to say:

"The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (The Greek reads, "you have not life in yourselves.")

"Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.

"For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

This passage in the original Greek reads, "For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink."

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth (abideth—R. V.) in me, and I in him.

"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

The Revised Version for this verse reads: "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me." Jesus in all this is referring to the spiritual life, and to the spiritual being, who is continually nourished and sustained by that spiritual life which is of God. Throughout all that Jesus says here there runs the thought of that spiritual oneness of God and all His creation, which he made so prominent a part of his teachings. It simply resolves itself into just this: Man is created in the image and likeness of God, more

than that, he is created out of the *very life* of God, out of the *very substance* of God. Each "Son of man" is therefore a divine being, and is of the Divine Life Itself and of that life alone; and so partaking of that spiritual life, each is nourished unto eternal life. So Jesus continues saying:

"This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever."

Thus it is life sustaining life and that forever. He that eateth of materiality continues to desire and it all at last comes to an end. But he that eateth of spiritual food lives forever.

"These things said Jesus in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum."

Again there was a failure to understand on the part of his hearers. They did not know what he was talking about, and so Jesus says to them after they had murmured among themselves:

"It is the spirit that quickeneth (or is giving life); the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

Or, as it reads in the original Greek, "The *spirit* is *that* which *makes alive;* the flesh profits nothing;

the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." The flesh that they thought he was talking about as he stood there before them was the flesh that perisheth; the flesh which brings sorrow and suffering; which may be laid down and which at last disappears.

You see, Jesus speaks to them of two kinds of food, of two kinds of flesh, in the same way that he spoke of the two kinds of man: the material man which is born of materiality and which perisheth, and the spiritual man who is born of the Spirit and who is endowed with eternal life. His disciples and all that hear him are puzzled, they do not understand his comparisons and they are too steeped in materiality to catch his spiritual meaning. He speaks of material food, like that manna of which their fathers in the wilderness did eat, and they are dead. Then he speaks of the living bread, of which if a man shall eat, he shall live forever. He wishes to get their minds away from so much materiality to an understanding of spiritual things. He speaks of the "flesh that profiteth nothing," the material flesh which passes away, and of "the flesh of the Son of man," which is the spiritual man. This flesh he says, "is meat indeed," or, as one translation renders it, "is the true food." To eat of this is to have eternal life. He that eats of the material food shall hunger and thirst again, but he that partaketh of the spiritual food is satisfied, and shall know neither

hunger nor thirst. "A man may eat thereof, and not die"; indeed "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever."

"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?"

The thing, as I believe, that lay on Jesus' mind more closely and more heavily than anything else, was the desire that mankind should understand his mission and his teachings. And so I can imagine the tenderness and pity, and yet the sorrow in his own heart because those to whom he had been talking had not recognized the spiritual truth in his words. He stood there alone in his knowledge of these great truths which he would so gladly have communicated to them if they would only open their minds to receive. Here were the twelve disciples who were bound to him by no ties except the ties of choice. He left them free to do as they chose, just as he would have every human being free. He had invited them to come with him and they had accepted his invitation, yet they were equally free to go. And now when those to whom he has been talking have failed to comprehend him and have gone away, and others of his disciples also, he does not even appeal to these twelve to stay with him. He merely says, "Will ye also go away?"

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

And yet, we know, it was only with dimness that Peter discerned the truth.

XIII

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES
(John VII.)

The seventh chapter of John might be called the chapter of misunderstandings or discords. From one point of view at least, there is little else in it from beginning to end. From another point of view, there are expressed some great and most helpful truths. It begins by setting forth that:

"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him.

"Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand."

The Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Ingathering[1] was one of the great feasts. It had grown into a distinct formality and was attended with much ceremony at the temple. It was the feast at the close of the harvest season, very much like our own Thanksgiving as it was originally, of course varied from our Thanksgiving by the character and habits of the people and their mode of living. The name "tabernacle" comes from a custom in use in Judea long before the

[1] Exodus xxiii. 16; Leviticus xxiii. 34–44.

temple was built or before the temple ceremonies were instituted. The " tabernacle " is literally the " booth " or " tent " and designated the temporary shelter which the harvesters erected during the harvest time in the immediate vicinity of their fields. The climate in Palestine at that time of year was favorable for this. The weather was mild, without rain, and so they set up for themselves temporary shelter, very often simply built of the branches of trees to keep off the dews of night. Here they practically lived during the harvest season, and after the harvest was gathered it was perfectly natural that they should have their time of rejoicing. And out of this grew the temple ceremonies.

But it was more than a harvest festival, for it also commemorated the journeying of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, when they had to dwell in booths. We see how too in our own country it has been with regard to our Thanksgiving. It was at first a day of giving thanks at the end of the harvest time when the crops were all gathered, and thanks were given for the fruitful year. Out of this has grown our national holiday. And out of somewhat similar beginnings grew the Feast of the Tabernacles, which was one of the most important feasts of the Jews. With them as with us, it was a festival of rejoicing and of thankfulness, a time of commemoration. It

was incumbent on all Jews to attend this feast, because as we are all aware, it was an occasion for worship. And the Jews at the time of Jesus believed that God could be worshipped only in the temple. Jesus was in Galilee.

"His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

"For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world.

"For neither did his brethren believe in him."

They were divided against him. They had heard of the wonderful things he had done but they did not believe in him. What they said to him in effect was: "If you do these things, go where people may understand what you are about. Go, and let people know the good things you are doing. Go, that thy disciples also may know the works that thou doest." Now and then we have certain instances of the same kind of thing happening in these days.

"Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come; but your time is alway (always) ready.

"The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

"Go ye up unto this feast; I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come."

Jesus knew that his own work was not yet complete, but this did not apply to his brothers, whose work was that of ordinary humanity. He recognized, you see, the difficulty into which he was already plunged. He could not walk in Judea because the Jews sought to kill him; he was hedged about by personal danger. What was to come to him further, others knew not, though he himself may have known. And right here he sets forth the reason for the antagonism which he aroused in the people. "The world cannot hate you." The world does not hate its fellows; the world does not hate those who are of its kind. These brethren of his were of this worldly kind, as their language to him here indicates. "But me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." If we bear this in mind in considering how Jesus was generally regarded it explains very many things. Men do not like to be told of their wrong doings. They are immediately antagonized by it. And so antagonism was aroused against him. He was doing things that the world, the Jewish world, understood not. Their uncertainty became fear and fear soon grew into hatred. The leaders had recognized already that if the things that Jesus taught should be made practical their places would be vacant and there would be nothing for them to do. They had recognized that his doctrine would overturn the world.

Indeed, he even said that the last shall be first and the first last. And they themselves were first, and as is the case with human nature, they did not like to lose their position as leaders.

"When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.

"But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, (publicly—R. V.) but as it were in secret."

And yet not exactly in secret. The journey to Judea from Galilee on this occasion was always a time of rejoicing. It was a motley throng journeying thither, and all was jollity and good feeling among them. But Jesus merely avoided them, going quietly by himself. The feast was not a matter of a day; the ceremonies lasted a week; so it would not seem to be essential that he should be there all the time.

We talk much about courage. In fact we have a great admiration for it, and we have a quite definite idea as to what it will accomplish. The soldier who risks his life for his country is honored perhaps more than any other man. And yet courage is common enough when in the heat of action one is exerting himself to the utmost. Almost any one, under pressure, will meet physical danger. But here is an exhibition of courage on the part of the man who would not raise his hand against his enemies yet faces danger

to his own life, for he knows that his going up to Judea might be considered a challenge. When he arrived, he went directly to the temple, on which all eyes at that time were fixed. This man, who beforehand knew that he would not lift his hand in self-defense whatever might come, and who in the face of death itself did not resist, went up to the temple in the very midst of his enemies. Courage? Every soldier knows that the trying time is before the order to attack is given. Every soldier knows that the most difficult time is when he waits inactive. But Jesus walked up there in the midst of his foes, knowing there was not to be on his part one single act of either offense or defense. Looked at from the point of view of physical courage alone, it was remarkable.

"Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

"And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him; for some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people (leadeth the multitude astray—R. V.).

"Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews."

Of course they were all Jews, or mainly Jews; it was the leaders whom they feared. It was the common people who murmured or spoke under their breath and not aloud for fear of what the leaders might do. Even

these were divided against him for some said he was a good man, while others said he was a deceiver. Thus far the story, you see, is but one continual jangle. Indeed most of this chapter gives a picture of the conditions of public opinion with regard to Jesus.

"Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught."

He became immediately a marked man. They had been seeking to kill him. He showed himself openly before all Judea, and all the Jews were assembled at the feast. The action was a public one. Jesus stood up before them and delivered his message.

I wish we had a fuller record of this occasion; I wish we knew what he said to these men. But what we have here is merely a report of the dispute which arose between him and those who derided him. The first thing we notice is an increase of the distrust among the people and of their dislike of him.

The Jewish system of education consisted mainly in learning the alphabet, so they could read and master their sacred texts, and could understand the interpretation of their scriptures. The principal teachers had their titles then as we have them now.

"And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

Jesus had never had any instruction in the niceties of their doctrine, and accordingly they put no faith in him and would not listen to him. How are we going to prove the truth of his words? Why should we accept his mere statement unsupported by any of the leaders and teachers? they question. And that is the position to-day in some respects at least. If a man can add a string of titles to his name, if he belongs to some important organization, he is accorded great honor and is listened to respectfully. That is the general way of things, now as well as then. But Jesus had none of this homage paid to him. He belonged to no school, so far as they knew. He had little if any of what they looked upon as learning.

"Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine[1] is not mine, but His that sent me.

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

This is the answer of Jesus: "My doctrine (or teaching) is not mine, but His that sent me." He had learned at a different school; he had been taught not by man but by God and he recognized the teaching of his Father and so taught the Father's doctrine. Here is the plain assertion of this one, unknown, unlettered

[1] "Teaching" is nearer the original Greek than "doctrine," and is so translated in the Revised Version.

man. And he completes his statement with another sublime truth which according to the Revised Version is rendered: "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself." In other words: "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know whether my teaching is of God or not"; or, he shall know whether the teaching is of God, or whether it is merely the teaching of the human mind. What a contrast between his own position, and that of those whom he is addressing! They are looking for authority, the authority of the scholar; while Jesus leaves the issue to all mankind. It is not if the scholar, the learned man, will do His will, but if *any* man will do His will, he shall know whether the teaching is of God or not.

One translation reads: "If any man *wishes* to do His will"; we may even say, "If any man *chooses* to do His will"; or, "If any man loves to do the things that God desires, has pleasure in doing the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, or the teaching of the Divine Father." That is the way the spiritual inclination works; it prepares the eyes to see, the spirit to perceive. We all know this in our own experience.

Another statement made by Jesus is illustrative of this same truth, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

If any man desires to do God's will, as a hungry man desires to eat or a thirsty man to drink, he shall be filled with the knowledge of divine truth. We may ask, "What is God's will?" His will is in accordance with absolute rightness. If any man desires to do right he shall be strengthened in the knowledge of God. The desire to do right does not mean necessarily the desire to do the things that you now are doing. It does not mean loyalty to a certain set of ideas or even to any set of ideas. Neither does it mean that one should be rooted and grounded in one's own opinion. But it does mean a continual seeking after the right, whether it agrees with one's present viewpoint or not. And it means entire willingness to change an opinion, however much we may be wedded to that opinion, provided, of course, we are convinced that it is erroneous.

This, you see, needs not the teaching of learned scholars; it needs not instruction in this theory or that. It needs only the wish, the desire, of the person himself to see and to do the right. We shall probably make mistakes, and sometimes we shall think that to be right which is not right, but the desire to do God's will includes the desire to change the course of action as soon as one perceives that that course is not the correct one. The fruitage of evil or error is always within itself. So if we do something that is wrong,

there will follow circumstances which,—if we are really seeking the truth,—will show us that we have erred, and will enable us to regain the right course. Thus the way will be shown each time as we advance in the truth. There may be much stumbling and many falls by the way, indeed the way may even be lost at times, but if the wish is earnestly for the right, progress will be made. And however much the experience may be repeated it must at last result in the recognition of the truth. Each time one will advance a little ahead of where one was before, until the absolute right is reached. So has God constituted each human being! There is in the heart of every man this impulse to go onward. We are never satisfied with our present ideal. An ideal attained, means the glimpse of a higher and nobler one farther on. This is inevitable, and is always the case wherever we may be on the road to progress. After each failure there is always an opportunity for a fresh start. Indeed there is no such thing as ultimate failure, neither can there be, for God *is* God and each man is a spiritual being. Therefore turn to this spiritual self, and trusting its perceptions, *follow the right.*

"He that speaketh of (from—R. V.) himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."

Therefore it is not the glorification of the human that we are to proclaim but the glory of Him that sent us. And God sends every one of His children without exception, just as much as He sent Jesus the Christ. Every one of God's children is a spiritual being, and Jesus tells every one of us to call God *Father.* So in this sonship of God do we find our true spiritual relationship and therein is found all truth, right, and perfection; with this understanding alone can we say "and there is no unrighteousness in him."

Thus does Jesus give his instructions with regard to spiritual teaching and he gives also the assurance that at last we shall emerge from the error into the recognition of the absolute truth. One of the charges made against him at this time was that he broke the Sabbath, so, changing the subject abruptly he says:

"Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?"

Why, you are breaking the law yourselves! This was a serious statement to make to these law-abiding Jews, consequently they could not tolerate it, and they answered him:

"Thou hast a devil (or demon); who seeketh to kill thee?

"Jesus answered and said unto them, I did one work, and ye all marvel because of this.

"Moses hath given you circumcision; and on the Sabbath ye circumcise a man.

"If a man receiveth circumcision on the Sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken; are ye wroth with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath?"[1]

In circumcision the Sabbath is broken just as much as in healing a man on that day. Is it not more reasonable that circumcision should be postponed one day to observe the Sabbath law, than that a man should be allowed to continue in his suffering because it is the Sabbath? Between the two, which is the greater, which is of the more immediate necessity, that a man should be relieved of his suffering, or that circumcision should be performed? But it was because Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath that they were seeking to kill him. And so he says to them:

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

Often appearances deceive us, and so we are not to judge according to the outward appearance; we are to look below the surface of things and judge only wise and right judgment. There is also another thought here: you remember that Jesus said, "I judge no man," yet here he says, "Judge not according to the

[1] Verses 20–23 are given according to the Revised Version including the marginal reading.

appearance, but judge righteous judgment." He seems to contradict himself, yet he spoke accurately when he said, "I judge no man." It is not *man* that he is judging, but it is an event, an incident, an action. There is certainly a difference between condemning him who has done wrong, and condemning the wrong itself. That was the position of Jesus. Judge not even yourself, but judge the error, the evil, the wrong, giving it its true character. So you are not to judge or condemn him who did the wrong but you are to know and condemn the wrong itself, that you yourself may avoid that same wrong.

At first the Jews marveled at Jesus' teaching; now they wonder at his boldness. They think that because he is not arrested the rulers perhaps know that he is the Christ. But even this conclusion does not satisfy them. "No one will know whence Christ cometh," they say. "We know all about this carpenter's son. Surely he cannot be the Messiah."

"Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am; and I am not come of myself, but He that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

"But I know Him; for I am from Him, and He hath sent me."

The confusion increases. But many believe on him because of his wonderful works. Finally the Phari-

sees and the chief priests, disturbed by his growing popularity, send officers to take him.

"Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me.
"Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come."

Later Jesus makes the same statement to his immediate disciples. At this point in his career he predicts that the time is coming when he shall take himself entirely away from the world so that the world shall see him no more.

Then on the last day of the festival, the day when all the people were there to celebrate the closing of the harvest thanksgiving, the priests, bringing with them the sacred water, marched into the temple and appeared before the altar. One company of priests went on the left hand of the altar and the other on the right hand of the altar, one with the wine and the other with the water, and prayer was offered for a fruitful year and for the abundant rain of the coming winter. The people all participated in this ceremony by waving branches in their hands. In the pause that followed, in that great temple filled with people,

"Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.
"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Then in the following verse John offers an explanation of Jesus' words at this place, by saying:

"But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit)[1] was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

The words of Jesus in verses thirty-seven and thirty-eight are quite similar, you see, to those which he had spoken to the woman at the well: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."[2]

The deep suggestiveness of those words of Jesus spoken in the great temple in the presence of the waiting people, in the hush that followed the climax of the ceremony, is most impressive. The record then continues:

"Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.

"Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?

"Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

[1] Revised Version, Margin.

[2] In Isaiah (lv. 1) we find a similar passage: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

So there was a division among the people. See how trivial, how infinitesimal, a thing may prevent the recognition of the truth. What matters it whether it is from here or from there if it be the truth? What matters it whether one person or another declares it? Then, according to the record, "some of them would have taken Jesus, but no man laid hands on him."

"Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

"The officers answered, Never man spake like this man."

And that is true; never man spake like this one. There have been many prophets and many great religious teachers. Not one of them has spoken as Jesus spoke. Not one has ever declared such great truths as he declared.

There was a little further discussion, and Nicodemus now appears again. Notice that Nicodemus was one of the leaders, evidently a popular man, one with social position at stake. Yet he made an attempt to defend Jesus, for he apparently believed in him, and said:

"Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

"They answered him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

They assumed that Jesus was a native of Galilee and not of Bethlehem. Evidently they were still convinced that only out of Bethlehem could the Messiah come. Doubtless they would have been more attentive had Jesus come from their great capital, Jerusalem. But Galilee was insignificant in their eyes. It was considered by them almost outside the world, so it was they said, " for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

" And every man went unto his own house."

That was the end of the day, and Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.

XIV

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY
(John VIII. 2–11)

"And early in the morning Jesus came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

"They say unto him, Master (or Teacher),[1] this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

"Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

"This they said, tempting (or trying)[1] him, that they might have (whereof—R. V.) to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

"So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

"And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

"And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

"When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

[1] Revised Version, Margin.

"She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

This is the story. We have seen in the previous chapter how the enemies of Jesus had sent officers to take him, and how they were trying in every way to find some charge against him,—something of such character and importance as would warrant his arrest and removal. Their object was probably to bring him into conflict with the Mosaic law. I think they had already recognized his teaching concerning adultery[1] and had realized the great difference between his teaching and the law as given by Moses.

This subject was one of very considerable discussion among the Jews at that time; there were two opposing parties following two teachers, and public opinion ran high. Jesus comes this morning to the temple as he had been in the habit of doing, and again they try the same kind of question. It was the eighth day of the feast and there were many people there, also there was more freedom and less formality perhaps than on the previous days. Jesus came early and a great company of people gathered about him because he excited their curiosity. He was teaching strange ideas and there was the usual curiosity to see him and to hear what he had to say. And so he sat down and taught them.

[1] Matt. v. 27, 28, 31, 32.

And in the midst of this came the scribes and Pharisees with this woman. The proceedings were informal. The procedure under the Jewish law was largely so. It was the same, you remember, when Jesus was arrested; his arrest was accomplished in a way so contrary to our ideas of legal procedure that a large number of people are inclined to disbelieve the whole story, saying that it is a story made up by people who did not understand the law. And so here is the same informality. This woman is brought here in this public place. I do not suppose it was in the temple proper, but probably in the temple enclosure. Jesus is spoken of as teaching in the "porches," which enclosed an area of from twenty-five to forty acres; he was under some portion of these porches; you might say out in the open air. These people gathered about him as the people gather about the preacher in any outdoor meeting in an irregular and informal way. They drew near and interrupted his discourse, and stated the case. There was no question as to the infraction of the law; the woman was clearly guilty. What would he do about it?

This man has taught many things which seem so contrary to the law, is their thought. On another occasion[1] he outwitted them when they came to him with similar questions, and he turned the tables on

[1] Matt. xix. 3–12; Mark x. 2–12.

them. But now they have brought a different set of questions. They were talking before about the interpretation of the law, but here is a clear case of violation of the law, and so they quote the law:

"Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?"

Notice the difference between this and the other case. With regard to divorce, Moses permitted divorce, and Jesus, according to their way of looking at things, might well be justified in being even more strict than the Mosaic law required, in not permitting divorce so freely. But here the law is violated. "What sayest thou?" they say. In this way they tried to tempt him into some erroneous answer that thus they might have cause for their proposed accusations against him.

The issue has been laid before him. He must say either yes or no. He must say, "Stone her" or "Let her go." There were only those two answers which he could give. It would seem there was no escape from this dilemma, that he must of necessity do one thing or the other. If he bade them release her, it would be in violation of the Mosaic law, and they could lay that charge against him. If he should say, "Stone her," it would be in violation of his own precepts. Thus, whatever his answer, the situation was

such that they felt they had a charge against him. And I think one reason for their antagonism towards Jesus was that they had recognized the principle of absolute freedom which ran throughout all that he taught. So absolute was this principle of freedom that, if his teaching were followed in its entirety, the scribes and Pharisees would lose their positions, because their official duties would not be required. They had him decidedly in a corner as they thought. Thus they felt sure of success in their undertaking.

"But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not."

Picture this scene for yourselves,—this company gathered about Jesus here, a miscellaneous group interested in many different ways in what he had been saying, then these men of authority, the scribes and Pharisees, bringing to him this woman in her disgrace and making their charge against her, a charge which they substantiated beyond question. And Jesus does not immediately answer, but he stoops down and writes on the ground.

And when they continued asking him, pressing him with their questions, he lifted himself up and looked about on the assembled people. I think we can imagine something of how Jesus looked and spoke as he gazed into the faces of these men,—knowing their

minds and knowing their object, knowing also this woman even better than she knew herself,—and said to them in impressive tones those wonderful words which have been quoted the world over:

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

There are many people even now who are imposing judgment upon their fellow men for all sorts of offenses. This sin was then considered a capital offense. They had convicted this woman and execution of sentence was all that remained. In these days, if the words that Jesus spoke at that time could ring in the ears and touch the hearts of the people, the world would be less ready with its severe judgments and its death penalties. For when that question is brought directly home to any individual, there is but one answer, "I, too, am a sinner."

"And again Jesus stooped down, and wrote on the ground."

He hid his face from them. He left them to themselves and their own thoughts. Jesus often prefaced his remarks with the words, "But I say unto you which hear." Frequently he emphasized his statements by the solemn introduction, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." But in this instance, without any at-

tempt at emphasis he simply says, "*He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*"

I can understand how, under the solemnity of his words and looks, the arrogance and pride, the self-conceit and egotistical satisfaction, may have passed from the minds of those men who had brought that woman there. It was no miracle, it was just the effect of his words said as he alone of all men could say them.

"And they which heard it, *being convicted by their own conscience.*"

Jesus appeals, always and under all circumstances, to each one's own recognition of truth and right, unaffected by any external authority whatever. That is the wonderful freedom of his teaching. This principle is manifest in everything that he says and does. He makes no accusation against this woman or against her accusers. If he had even said, "Ye are like unto her," it would have aroused their antagonism. If there had been even the slightest thought of accusation in his own mind it would have aroused hostility and spoiled the effect of his words. He who taught the perfect forgiveness, forgave these men who were trying to bring a charge against him. He does not lift a hand or hold a thought against them. He leaves them absolutely free. Why, the very hiding of his

face as he wrote upon the ground was an action that left them free. And in the same way he leaves every one free and has taught us to do likewise. But because there is in his own mind not one particle of condemnation or judgment or other discordant thought but only absolute forgiveness, because of this, these men are in the position where they can act on their own impulse, on their own recognition of themselves, with all that such freedom implies. This is the standard which Jesus set up. It is the standard of absolute perfection. Under this standard they recognized the justice of his words and that they were unworthy to cast a stone at her. And so without any accusation, without word from any one,

"They went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst."

The question that they brought to him with such eagerness has disappeared with them. There is no longer any dilemma, and there really was not from the first. Jesus lifted up himself and looked at the woman. The picture that this description brings to mind is wonderfully impressive. What could have been the thoughts of the woman when Jesus stood up and looked at her? What did he say to her, this man who taught freedom as no other man has ever taught it; this man

who had said, "Judge not"? Have you ever stopped to think how far-reaching in its meaning is that little precept, "Judge not"? We must judge before we can execute judgment, for without judgment there can be no execution of judgment; without condemnation there can be no punishment of one man by another.

Here was an opportunity to read this woman a lecture on the sinfulness of her life; an opportunity to question her, to tell her how bad she was and to humble her in the dust with scorn and contempt. We, at least, consider it our duty to do thus if a person we know does wrong. We tell them how wrong it is, and we hold the sin up to them in as bad a light as possible. Did Jesus do anything of the sort? No, he did not. He had already told the Jews what he thought about such sins and it was because of what he had told them that they brought this woman to him. He does not belittle the offense in the slightest; he does not smooth it over in any way whatsoever; neither does he make accusation. He leaves the matter standing just where it is, so far as the offense is concerned. And we notice that he used in addressing the woman the same word that he used when speaking to his own mother, for, according to the records we have, Jesus then said to her:

"Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?"

Her answer was simple and straight to the point:

"No man, Lord."

Here again was an opportunity that no ordinary man would refuse, the opportunity to humble her in the very dust. This woman convicted by testimony of a capital crime, one of the most serious offenses known to the law of the land, this woman according to the custom of the people of that time, deserved to be stoned to death by any person who saw fit. Why, to let her go would be to undermine the foundation of civilized society; it would be to overturn all social considerations; it would be in itself, criminal. Any ordinary man would say she ought to be punished, that indeed, the law recognizes that she should be punished. But Jesus says nothing about punishment. He has been talking simply about condemnation, and condemnation always precedes punishment. Jesus follows his own precept, for he says unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee."

He here exemplifies one of the most important points in all his teaching:—*Judge not; condemn not.* He himself does not condemn. There was no thought in his mind of condemnation of her any more than there was of those who had brought her to him. And the absence of condemnation means the absence of punishment. He has followed his own precept; he has

not judged. He has literally done as he would wish to be done by, as you or I would wish to be done by, notwithstanding that men say that it is unsafe to do so. Jesus here touches upon the whole system of civilized law in this most significant of examples. It is not that he does not believe in capital punishment; it is that he does not believe in condemnation, and he tells us *not* to condemn, and that means that he does not believe in punishment at all.

I take this as a typical case illustrating just how Jesus would have men follow his precepts. If this error is to be treated in this way, then so is every other error to be treated in the same way. It almost seems as though the worst wrong or crime known to mankind came to Jesus to be decided upon, and in deciding the course to pursue with this one, he decided the course for every other one.

And Jesus goes a step farther. He not only does not lecture her for her offense, he not only does not condemn her, but having stated that he does not condemn her, he does the next logical thing; *he sets her free.*

"And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: *go, and sin no more.*"

The literal Greek is, "Go, from the now no longer sin." The Revised Version renders the passage, "Go

thy way; from henceforth sin no more." That is all. And Jesus says that to every human being just as he said it to this woman, just as he said it in spirit to those scribes and Pharisees, who recognizing his meaning, went without his telling them to do so. She, in her humble position, needs to be told to go. They went without the telling.

The great impressiveness of this story is in its very simplicity. There is just enough to it to stir the imagination and to move the hearts of men to their depths; just enough to open the mind to that one central thought of all his teaching, *forgiveness*. The putting of the wrong or evil thought out of the mind is from first to last the basis of the whole matter. And the discordant thought,—for all wrong thoughts are discordant,—being put out of mind, the wrong act, however we may characterize or designate it, cannot be committed. So it is in every instance, as it was in the case of this woman, and of the scribes and Pharisees who stole away from the gaze of Jesus.

The mind being free from discordant thoughts concerning others, perfect forgiveness is the result, and one's heart is filled with love, even the love that loves enemies. And the outcome of this, eventually, is absolute purity and perfection, as Jesus himself understood when he said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

XV

FREEDOM
(John VIII. 12–36)

The incident considered in the previous chapter was an interruption to the general course of the teaching which Jesus presented at the Feast of Tabernacles. You remember he did not go up to the temple with his brothers, but afterwards by himself; also he seems not to have been teaching at first but later on in the course of the festival. Thus far there had been a continual intensifying of the feelings against him. He had himself told his enemies of his realization that they were seeking to kill him. They had even sent out officers, but these officers had returned without taking him. They had had their discussion, as to what should be done, and Nicodemus had made some effort to defend him. From one point of view, we might say that we have here Jesus' defense of himself,—not a mere personal defense, but a setting forth in part at least, of the reasons why they should not kill him. We have not recognized as clearly as we might, how little Jesus puts forward his own personality. He in every way tries to efface his personal self that he may the better present to them the Christ,

the spiritual self. The discussion continues with interruptions. It does not appear that it was all in one day, and the more I study the subject, the more convinced I am that we have in our records only the barest outline of what really was said at this time.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

We are accustomed to look upon this as a very strong declaration. To the Jews who were listening to him, it was even stronger than we have generally regarded it. The Jews had been coming more and more to speak of God as the Light of the world, and their writings of that time characterized the Messiah as the Light of the world. Although Jesus did not think of himself as a Messiah, yet they thought he was claiming to be the Messiah. And here he appears to confirm this, when he says, "I am the light of the world." That is to say, in accordance with their understanding it was as if he said to them, "I am the Messiah that was to come." You see he thus intensifies and widens the difference between his viewpoint and their own, and he gives this convincing reason why they should not kill him. It is the strongest personal defense he could make, and yet there is nothing of personal character in it. They simply did not understand his lan-

guage. This statement does not, as I see it, refer to the *man* Jesus. The divine, spiritual being, the Christ, —not the personal man Jesus,—is "the light of the world"; and not only *is* the light of the world, but was, and ever will be. The difference between his viewpoint and their own is seen in the fact that they understood absolutely nothing of his real meaning. They thought he was speaking of himself personally and understood his declaration to mean that he, the man, was the Messiah.

"He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." This means, he that follows the spirit, the truth, or the right, he that follows the Christ, "shall not walk in darkness." "But shall have the light of life," that is, he shall have the light of eternal life, the light of God's own life, to guide him. What a marvelous statement! But how blind is the human perception in this particular case, as in so many others! They were bound by their own laws and their own material interpretations, they were looking at the external instead of the reality, and thus were entirely oblivious to the true meaning of Jesus. Seeking for a point of attack the Pharisees say to him:

"Thou bearest record[1] of thyself; thy record is not true."

[1] The Revised Version uses "witness" instead of "record" in verses thirteen and fourteen.

This was a maxim of the Jewish law; if in their courts, or in their trials, a man testified of himself and there was no corroborative testimony, his testimony was not accepted. It was taken to be erroneous and there was no longer any case. And so here, they take advantage of this legal technicality. It is the same kind of proceedings that we have in our own courts, in fact, that exist in the courts of every civilized land to-day. Men take advantage of legal technicalities to gain their ends, rather than attempt to find out the truth in the case under consideration. This is an interruption and Jesus meets it, saying:

"Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go."

This may read a little more clearly as given in the Revised Version: "Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye know not whence I come, or whither I go." Because of their ignorance, to them this statement is untrue. He practically says to them here, that they know not the truth, and indeed, are not looking for the truth. And so he continues:

"Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man."

"Ye judge *after the flesh,*" that is, ye judge according to the material, from the standpoint of error. Ye

judge in accordance with the legal technicality; ye are not in search of the truth. "I judge no man," meaning, *I*, the personal Jesus, judge no one.

"And yet if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me."

Jesus would seem at first thought to contradict himself here when he says, "I judge no man" and yet immediately adds, "And yet if I judge, my judgment is true." But if we study the context the meaning will be quite clear. Jesus means that he does not constitute himself the sole judge of any one. The emphasis in the Greek shows this, "*Ye* judge after the flesh; *I* judge nobody." When he says, "But if I judge, my judgment is true," he means that it is in accordance with God's truth. It is not made through himself alone as the personal Jesus, but only in connection with the Father, for he says, "*Because I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent me.*" Such judgment must be "*true*" because it is of God, and therefore it is entirely different from that judgment which is according to the flesh, or which is the judgment of the material man, the personal self. It is as Jesus said in the fifth chapter of this Gospel: "I can of *mine own self* do nothing; as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just (righteous—R. V.); *because*

I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

You see, Jesus is here again referring to spiritual conditions, to that which these men neither perceived nor understood and of which they had not the slightest conception. He then continues, pointing more directly to the allegation:

"It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

"I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

Or, in other words, "It is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am one who testifies concerning myself, and the Father who sent me testifies also concerning me." He does not testify of himself alone but he testifies in connection with the Father. And that testimony of the Father is expressed throughout the whole career of Jesus. Yet how blind they were! We see again in their next question that they are still attempting to trap him in his talk, to find something they may use against him.

"Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father; if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."

This question of theirs, "Where is thy Father," is a taunt, whether it arose from ignorance or wilfulness.

And in our understanding of the answer of Jesus we must bear in mind the difference between the spiritual man and the material man. It was the material or earthly nature in them that was talking to Jesus and trying to destroy him.

Jesus' answer perhaps reads a bit more clearly as given in the Revised Version: "Ye know neither me, nor my Father; if ye knew me, ye would know my Father also." As we know Jesus, the Christ, so do we know the Father. No truer words did Jesus utter than when he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."[1] Jesus is here speaking of the spiritual vision, the spiritual perception. He that hath seen the Christ hath perceived the truth. He therefore does know the Father, for God the Father is Truth Itself.

"These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come."

The day before they had sent out officers to arrest him, yet here he was in the treasury, the most public part of the temple, and the place most resorted to by the Jews. There was nothing private or concealed about the place nor about his actions, and yet they did not take him. And so he said again unto them:

[1] John xiv. 9.

"I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."

The word "sins" means, in the Greek, "sinning." Sometimes it means "sinfulness." It denotes the active principle of sinfulness. The word in Mark iii. 28, —"all their *sins* shall be forgiven," is a different Greek word meaning, the *act* of sinning. Both come from a root which means, *a failure to hit the mark.* So the word translated "sin" has a broader scope in its meaning than just an evil deed. It includes any mistake, any deviation from the truth, the not-good in any form. This word is equivalent to "error," which comes from a Latin root meaning, to go astray, to wander.[1]

In this instance when Jesus says, "Ye shall seek *me,*" he is speaking of the personal man, not the Christ, for it was not *the Christ* they were seeking. They had their idea of the Messiah, of what he ought to be, but it was purely a materialistic one. The thoughts they had in mind were of external things, of outside show. They dreamed of a prince in all the array of royalty, sitting on a throne and ruling the people, and slaying thousands upon thousands of men. That was their idea of the man they were looking for, a man who

[1] *A Search After Ultimate Truth,* Chapter XXXII, "Error."

would dominate and control, would drive and direct, a man who would kill and slay,—not a man of truth, not the spiritual man of God. And this was their great mistake, their great misunderstanding. And they did die in this error, as untold numbers have since died, believing in domination, believing in the power and the wealth, the glitter and glare of the world, and all the trappings of the external man. They were seeking these things and not the truth, or, at least, if seeking it, it was for their own selfish ends. So Jesus said truly, "Whither I go, ye cannot come." Whither I the Christ, whither I the spiritual being, go, these come not. Again it is as he said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It is spirit that recognizes spirit. There is not a quality, not a faculty, not an ability of the sense-man which can by any possibility perceive spirit. And so Jesus continues in the same vein:

"Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am (he), ye shall die in your sins."

The pronoun "he" does not occur in the original and is in italics in the King James Version, showing

that it was inserted by the translators. It is omitted in the Revised Version (Margin), the passage reading thus: "For except ye believe that I am, ye shall die in your sins." Jesus here uses the emphatic "*I am*"[1] which when thus used we might call the name or title of the spiritual being, for here Jesus refers to the Christ of himself. The spiritual being is not and never will be of this world; but the spiritual being is "from above." The man of Spirit is born "from above." He who has not recognized this spiritual birth for himself must, as it were, be "born again" into the recognition of himself as he really is. Then they say unto him:

"Who art thou?"

They had caught a glimpse of the truth, and their curiosity was aroused. They had recognized that at least Jesus was not talking in the ordinary manner of speech, and so they say, "Who art thou?" And his answer was a declaration that our translators have stumbled over ever since it was written here in this Book of John, and our commentators have puzzled over ever since they began the interpretation of these Gospels. As translated in the King James Version it reads:

[1] See Chapter XVI, pages 238–241.

"Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning."[1]

This is easily understood if we take the spiritual interpretation as given above. The passage might be interpreted thus: "I am that which I told you from the beginning of my teaching, even that which I told you to-day." Jesus, as we see, is referring here to the Christ, the spiritual being of himself. And so he continues again:

"I have many things to say and to judge of you."

Notice he has just said "I judge no man"; I condemn no man. Yet here he says, "I have many things to judge of you," or, "*concerning* you," as it reads in the Revised Version. We must not forget that it is the *acts* of the man, his errors, his mistakes, and not the man himself that Jesus judges, and this only in connection with the Father. For when speaking thus Jesus always mentions the Father also. So, in this instance, he immediately goes on to say:

"But He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him."

[1] This passage in the Revised Version reads: "Even that which I have also spoken unto you from the beginning." A closer rendering of the original might read: "Whatever from the beginning I tell you;" while an even closer rendering is, "Exactly what I have been telling you."

He has striven to tell them these things from the night when he talked with Nicodemus to the day of his conversation with the woman at the well, and now also in this most public place of all Judea. He has striven to tell them of spiritual things, but all along it has been just as it is here; they are looking purely to the external, and so as the record states, they understood not that Jesus spake to them of the Father.

"Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am (he),[1] and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."

The Revised Version, including Margin, gives a very good rendering of verses twenty-six and twenty-eight: "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you: howbeit He that sent me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these speak I unto the world. Jesus therefore said, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things."

As elsewhere explained, the "Son of man" is the spiritual being of man. Jesus had previously said, "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son, even as they

[1] As in verse 24, "*he*" does not occur in the original Greek.

honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him." This means that men should honor the divinity within themselves. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man," or when you lift up the divine being of yourself, when you honor that spiritual being which is your real, true self, and recognize that you are indeed a child of God, then shall you understand what Jesus means when he says, "Ye shall know that *I am*,[1] and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things."

"And He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him."

Even by the coldest philosophy, by the coldest science, God is recognized as infinite; then if He is infinite, He is not only with Jesus the Christ, but He is with you and me and He is with every individual being that exists, or ever has existed, or ever will exist. "He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone." God is omnipresent, *therefore* He is present not only here and now, but everywhere and at all times. We may well ask to have our perception quickened as Jesus' was, so that we, too, may perceive these great truths even as he perceived them.

[1] See Chapter XVI, pages 238–241.

"For I do always those things that please Him." Who else can make this assertion? And in doing those things that please God, there comes the light that reveals His presence to the perception of the doer. We ask sometimes, why so many failures? The answer, or the suggestion of the answer, is found in this declaration of Jesus, for if we do those things which please God *we cannot fail.* And *He has not left us alone.* It must have been an impressive moment, for the narrator says:

"As he spake these words, many believed on him.
"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."

"If ye continue in my word," that is, if ye continue in my teaching, if ye abide in my instruction; and the Revised Version reads: "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples." My instruction is the truth, for "as the Father hath taught me, I speak these things." He turns to no human authority. He has listened to the voice of God Himself.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

One of the great quests or desires of the world has been for *freedom;* freedom to live and to do as one

chooses. Men have pursued it in all sorts of ways, often failing to grasp its true meaning, and they are still seeking it. Yet real freedom is found only in the truth, in true living. Look over the laws of the world from earliest times until to-day; do not omit even the laws of the Jews, nor the Decalogue; and the burden is,—*bondage*,—"Thou shalt not." We are told that we must not do this, or that, or the other thing. In prohibition there is no freedom, and can be no freedom. This for the world of materiality. But turn to the other side; turn to the truth, and for a moment think what truth really is. Truth is absolute rightness and there is no need of prohibition in absolute rightness. There is no "Thou shalt not" in the truth, for *there* is perfect freedom. Truth is absolute good, and when we attain that, there is nothing to prohibit. Sometimes we seem to recognize a need of prohibition in connection with some of the things which we call good, but the instant that thought appears we should realize that it has been caused by the not-good, the error, because there is always the thought of prohibition in connection with error. No one ever yet contemplated a wrongful or a sinful act without the warning voice of the conscience within him saying, "*Thou shalt not.*"

In our search for freedom we frequently make mistakes as to what freedom really is. For instance, the

boy is told that he must not drink. That, to him, is an interference with his liberty. He thinks he is being limited in the course of his freedom, and there is in every human being that ever was born, the instinct to rebel against the limitation of his freedom. This is because of the divinity which resides in every human being and which instinctively believes in and seeks for freedom. The boy therefore defies the prohibition and drinks; but he awakes to bondage and learns his mistake,—that freedom does not lie in that direction. So have men, even wise men, done throughout the history of the world. They do not look where freedom is, just as those Jews who were having this discussion with Jesus, did not look where freedom really was. Freedom is in the absolute truth and nowhere else. And in living the truth we find real freedom. The door thereto is narrow, the way is narrow, and will be, so long as we recognize evil and believe in it. But when we once enter in at that door, then shall we go in and out and find pasture. There is the whole of God's creation open before us; the infinite universe is His creation, and therein is no limitation whatsoever. So let us remember that Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word (my teaching), then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and *the truth shall make you free.*"

But what did these Jews understand of this? Sen-

sitive, proud of their nationality and their race, they scorned the suggestion that they were anything but free.

"They answered Jesus, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

How far away they were in their ignorance! The contrast between those who deal with external things and those who deal with truth is clearly set forth here. And Jesus replies:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."

The Revised Version reads: "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin." Another rendering is, "Indeed, I assure you, that every one doing sin is a slave of sin." Whosoever doeth wrong is the servant of wrong, is in bondage to that wrong. It makes no difference what the error is. The man who lies, must pay the penalty for that lie; he is therefore in bondage to that lie. The man who steals must make his stealing good, so is he in bondage to that stealing. And so throughout the whole catalogue of sins. Error or wrong, whichever you choose to call it, is the exact opposite of truth, and if truth be freedom, then error or sin is bondage. The word trans-

lated "servant" is stronger than our translators make it and literally means "slave." Whosoever commits sin is the bonded slave of sin; that is the literal meaning of the Greek. Touch one point of error with but the tip of your finger, and to that error the man who touches it, is in bondage.

But Jesus does not leave the subject here, he takes up as an illustration a social condition that was well known to his auditors:

"The servant (or slave) abideth not in the house forever; but the Son abideth ever."

There were various ways in which the slave was set free; he for instance could be sold to another house. He was the chattel of his master, and only under certain laws could he be made free. Thus, this statement that the servant abideth not in the house forever is a most gracious one, for under the preceding statement as it stands, a pall of darkness might shut down on the whole human race. But, "The servant abideth not in the house forever," meaning, "We shall not always be in bondage."

Because of God's infinity, because He is literally omnipresent, all error or sin must eventually disappear, and with it will disappear the idea of slavery in all its forms. Then shall man awaken to his real freedom, then shall he truly manifest his sonship.

Turn back to that discussion with the Jews, who persecuted Jesus for healing the man on the Sabbath day, and read there again what "*the Son*" means.[1] The next time you repeat the Lord's Prayer, stop a moment and think what you are in the essential of yourself that Jesus should tell you to say "*Our Father.*" The Son, the divine being which you are in your true spiritual existence, is with you always. So the bondage caused by our ignorance will not abide forever, "*but the Son abideth forever.*"

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

When you realize that "the Son," your spiritual self, is free, then are you indeed free. This is the perfect freedom, and this freedom comes at last to every one of God's children. It will come at last even to the persecutors of Jesus, because they shall one day understand, and understanding shall escape from their bondage. It comes at last to the whole world, for "the servant abideth not forever, but the Son abideth ever."

Therefore freedom such as this is yet to be, because in fact it is the heritage of every one of God's family. We do not use it, because we have not perceived it, or

[1] John v. especially verses 19–27.

rather, we use it only in proportion as we have perceived it. But we shall one day perceive it in its fullness, and then we shall realize that "the Son," the "I am," abideth forever.

XVI

CONCLUSION OF THE TABERNACLES DISCOURSE

(John VIII. 37–59)

We come now to the conclusion of the discourse, as well as the culmination of the incidents at the Feast of the Tabernacles. In the last chapter we discussed Jesus' great declaration of freedom: "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" And we remember how there was again a failure to understand on the part of the Jews. They, in the pride of their nationality, were disturbed by the suggestion that they had ever been anything but free, and so, failing to recognize the great principle of freedom which Jesus presented, they started to defend themselves from the possible allegation that they were slaves, by saying, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

We discussed also, the answer of Jesus to that. It was not the bondage of the nation, the ordinary slavery of man, that he was talking about, but it was the bondage to error, and the servitude of sin. And he concludes what he has to say on that point by acknowledging their declaration that they are Abraham's seed, for he says:

"I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you."

That is, "You seek to kill me because you have no recognition of the truth which I am telling you." Then he asserts:

"I speak that which I have seen with my Father; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father."

Jesus makes the contrast clear and distinct between his position and theirs. He speaks that which he has seen with his Father, meaning that he, the spiritual man, the Christ, is attempting to tell them of God's spiritual truth, which they, as we have seen all along, fail to recognize, always turning their attention to material things. In sharp contrast to his behavior they are seeking to kill him, and thus they are doing that which they have seen with their father, the material man.

"They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father."

Jesus has just said, "I know ye are Abraham's seed," and now comes what seems like a contradiction, for in answer to their claim that they are Abraham's seed, he replies:

"If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."

But a closer rendering of the original Greek is, "If you *are* Abraham's children, do the works of Abraham." According to this interpretation the contradiction disappears. Then he adds:

"But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham."

Now from one point of view, they were Abraham's children, yet from another point of view, they were not. If they had been in spirit the children of Abraham, they would not have contemplated doing those things they were proposing to do. It was the external man who so proposed; the spiritual being of themselves was hidden behind this external. Jesus had heard and learned of God; they had heard and learned from another source that was directly contrary to that spiritual source. And so he says:

"Ye do the deeds of your father."

Then they, smarting under his statements, and recognizing more or less the force of them, hurl at him the strongest assertion they can possibly make:

"We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God."

Somehow or other, it would seem that because of these things which Jesus had told them, something of

the truth that God is indeed the Father of every man, had entered their minds. And so here, they lay claim to that. Thus they had some idea, some recognition of the great truth which he had attempted to reveal to them in all that went before. But Jesus meets them even on this point.

"If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me."

He speaks with the entire consciousness and confidence of himself, born of his communication with the Father, born of his knowledge of the Father, born of his recognition of infinite truth. You remember how he said in the fifth chapter of John, "The Son can do nothing of himself," and a little farther on in the same chapter, "I can of mine own self do nothing." And so he says here, "I proceeded, came forth from God, but not of myself, but He sent me." Jesus always refers to God as the inspiration of his spiritual actions, his spiritual doings, always calling Him the author of the divine being within himself. He repeatedly says to men as he said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." He uses similar expressions throughout all his teachings, always recognizing

through spiritual perception that the good is from God and from Him alone. So, too, Paul says, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."[1] Always this, "I of myself can do nothing." And now Jesus emphasizes again the great gulf between the material and the spiritual, for he goes on to say:

"Why do ye not understand my speech?" answering at once, "even because ye cannot hear my word."

Cannot hear his word? They were listening to the audible word, and heard it with terrible distinctness, but it filled not their hearts with the love of God. These men heard only with the external ear; that ear hears not and never can hear the spiritual truth; it is the inner perception which recognizes truth. Thus it was they heard not his spiritual teaching. What little of truth had filtered down through their dense understanding they used only for self-defense against his charges, as when they said that they were children of Abraham, aye more, that they were children of God. "Why do you not understand my speech? even because you cannot hear my word." The divine conscience existing in every man proclaims the word of truth. As darkness is to light, as John stated in the first part of his Gospel, so error is to truth, so is the

[1] Philippians ii. 13.

material man to the spiritual man. These senses of ours do not tell us one single thing with regard to God, not one single recognition of Him comes to us through the sense perceptions.[1] It is the spiritual perception alone that recognizes spirit, that hears the word of God. And so these men of the earth could not understand his speech, for they were listening only with the outer ear. Jesus continues, further characterizing them, with this stern accusation, "Ye are of your father the devil."

We see that Jesus is alluding to what seems to be a dual existence; the spiritual existence, which is the true being of man and which represents the truth; and the material existence which is the earth man, representing untruth. The material man is of materiality, and of that alone. The spiritual being is of God. They were meeting his statements of spirituality with the statements of materiality. And so Jesus was referring here to the material man of them.

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him."

Here is a translation which follows the meaning of the Greek as closely as does the King James Version:

[1] *A Search After Ultimate Truth,* Part Four, "Materiality."

"You are from the father, the slanderer, and the lusts (desires, wishes) of your father you wish to do (or are determined to do). He was a manslayer from the beginning, and has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him." The word that in the King James Version is translated "devil" means "one prone to slander, or one accusing falsely." Evil, error, is always accusing truth, always making a false statement with regard to the truth, indeed is always seeking to prevent the truth.

Evil is the one that brought them forth, and so the desires of that evil they will do. Evil recognizes evil, and the desire of evil is for more evil, and is never towards the right. Evil is a murderer from the beginning, literally a manslayer. In this world, as we see things, evil kills; evil is slaying mankind on every hand. So they, in those days, were doing the deeds of their father the devil, or evil, in attempting to slay Jesus, for their father was a manslayer from the beginning. If you go back to the Old Testament, to the story of the serpent in the third chapter of Genesis, you will find this idea of sin distinctly set forth. And so is Jesus' statement here straight to the point, and thus does he characterize evil or the spirit of evil.

Jesus makes here the distinction between right and wrong, or between truth and untruth, as clearly as he makes it all the way through, from the Sermon on

the Mount to the close of the Gospels; as when he said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"; and in the Sermon on the Mount when he said, "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." The cleavage is as distinct in one place as another. There is no truth in evil and when the two appear to be mingled we may by analysis separate the untruth from the truth until we have on the one hand that which is evil alone, and on the other hand, that which is truth alone. We see the good and evil apparently mingled together in the world, like the wheat and the tares growing together in the field, but if we examine closely we shall see that, like the wheat and the tares, they are distinct from each other. Having characterized the position of these men, Jesus goes on to say:

"When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

This man of materiality speaks out of his own sin; he is a liar and therefore the father of a lie, because of his own error.

"And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not."

As before stated, evil does not recognize truth, and so because Jesus speaks the truth, these men, so imbued with error, so filled with untruth, were absolutely unable to believe him. The reason why they did not believe lay not in him but in themselves. There was that in them, as in every man, that might have heard and received the truth. But the spiritual recognition was overclouded with the mists of materiality. Jesus continues:

"Which of you convinceth (convicteth—R. V.) me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"

Though put as a question, it is yet an exclamation. He has done his best. You know how it has been whenever Jesus has spoken; it has been with the same kind of interjection and interruption, with the same contradictions, the same blindness of spiritual understanding, on the part of these men. And again Jesus states a proposition similar to some that have gone before, though in different language:

"He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

"He that is of God heareth God's words." A passage from the First Epistle of John is directly in harmony with these words of Jesus: "We are of God:

he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." This is always so. We notice how on some of the most solemn occasions when Jesus was uttering the deepest truths, he would preface what he was about to say with, "But I say unto you which hear." But on this occasion he was talking to blind eyes and to deaf ears, and to hearts of error. So is it any wonder that these men responded as they did to these statements of his?

"Then answered the Jews, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"[1]

To evil, truth is itself evil. Every man, every human being, who has ever attempted to teach the truth, has been attacked by the slanders of evil. It is the same the world over, and this is always the fate of truth at the hands of error. "Thou art a Samaritan!" Scorn and contempt! A Samaritan according to their idea was only fit to be spit upon. So it was hardly stronger language when they added, "and hast a devil." It is curious, but entirely consistent with the philosophy of Jesus, that he does not stop to answer to the in-

[1] In verses 48, 49, 52, the word for "devil" in the original is different from the word "devil" just discussed in verse 44. In "Thou hast a devil" the word is one sometimes called "demon" and is not necessarily allied with the devil. It is more as if they had said, "Thou art bewitched" or "Thou art crazy."

dignity which they thought was contained in charging him with being a Samaritan. Jesus recognizes all men as equal and he merely contents himself with saying:

"I have not a devil; but I honor my Father, and ye do dishonor me."

I think that they were honest in their convictions, that they thought they were doing right. In the vast majority of cases, the man who does wrong thinks that, under the circumstances, what he does is the right thing for him to do. So always is the course of untruth, so always does error fail to understand.

"And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.
"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, (word—R. V.) he shall never see death."

As I have said before in our consideration of this discourse, I think we have the barest outline of what Jesus said at this time. I wish we did have the words connecting this declaration with the one immediately preceding. However, no matter how far behind him we may walk, we yet are confident that if any man does keep the sayings of Jesus "he shall never see death." But to them this was a ridiculous statement. He had made it before, and he made it afterwards; but they, in their ignorance, failed to understand, just as many scientific men of to-day do, who are search-

ing in materiality alone for the solution of great truths. To them, materiality is all there is of us, and to their thinking, when materiality disappears, we disappear too. Then said the Jews, in reply to this strange declaration made by Jesus:

"Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

"Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?"

"Whom makest thou thyself?" This is what they have been asking all along. "Who art thou?" He had not yet told them to their satisfaction. Jesus merely replies:

"If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoreth me; of whom ye say, that He is your God."

The rendering of this passage in the Revised Version is: "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father that glorifieth me." "My Father, whom ye say is your God." That was their claim in their egotism. And yet they were right in their claim, for Jesus taught us and all mankind to say, "Our Father which art in heaven." In making this claim for himself, he claims no more than he tells us to claim for

ourselves. It is not the external, material man who is the Son of God, but it is the spiritual man. Yet by many of us this spiritual being has been so unrecognized that we scarcely realize its existence.

"Yet ye have not known Him."

This declaration applies to the whole human race. Search history from the beginning until now, from the past down to the present, and how much does it tell, how much does it know of God the Father? Rather how much has He been misrepresented on every hand! Mankind knew not until the Christ came forth and declared the truth.

"Ye have not known Him; but I know Him: and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know Him, and keep His saying" (or word).

Who can echo that? We get dim glimpses of the Infinite Divine Being whom we call God, flashes of an instant that light us throughout our career; yes, it is true that just one instant of such recognition is enough to enlighten a lifetime on this earth. But who of us shall say that we know Him? Jesus the Christ is the only one who has thus known Him and his declarations so often fall on ears that hear not. But we do hear sometimes and it is the sound of a harmony that

is beyond human ears; we do sometimes receive glimpses that are beyond human sight, and are indeed glimpses of a glory ineffable. Such knowledge is not beyond us, as we must realize if we but listen to the words of Jesus. Notice Jesus says, "I know Him and *keep His saying.*" And we shall have a deeper, clearer knowledge of God if we do the same. In order to become acquainted with God we should follow the teachings of Jesus. First of all, we should follow his great precept, "*Love your enemies.*" Jesus never told us to undertake an impossibility. And it is for us, it is for every human being, to accomplish all that Jesus told us to accomplish. Then he gives to them another statement, more amazing than anything they had yet heard, as well as more contrary to their own ideas:

"Your father Abraham rejoiced[1] to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

"Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (Or, "Before Abraham *was born,* I am." (R. V. Margin.)

Let us go back a little in the history of the Jews to the time when Moses had been appointed to lead the children of Israel out of the land of the Egyptians.

[1] The word that is translated "rejoiced," means "rejoiced vastly," or "with great joy."

Moses was doubting and fearing, and so did not know what to do. He asked of God:

"Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them?

"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." [1]

The first phrase or declaration, "I AM THAT I AM," because of its very simplicity presents some difficulty of translation. The Revised Version, Margin, renders it, "I AM BECAUSE I AM," or "I AM WHO AM," or, "I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE." The Septuagint, (meaning the *Greek* version) literally translated, reads, "I AM THE ONE THAT *IS*. THE ONE THAT *IS* hath sent me unto you." So Plato contrasts pure Being, that which *is*, with the material things which only appear to be.

Now when we take this phrase, "I AM THAT I AM," in connection with the one which follows, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent thee," I think we get a suggestion of the meaning which is contained here. "I AM THAT I AM; I AM hath sent thee." It is a declaration of being, of existence; a declaration of reality that passes mere

[1] Exodus iii. 13, 14.

personality and includes within its meaning all the characteristics that comprise the Infinite Being. I AM THAT I AM; I, THE BEING THAT IS BEING.[1]

So Jesus says, "Before Abraham was, *I am.*"[2] This is the designation for that divine, ever-existing life which was manifested in the Christ. It is indeed a declaration of the essential of himself, a declaration of eternal existence, and one which he himself must have understood, though knowing that they in their blindness could not understand. This "I Am," the divine spirit, existed in Jesus and it exists in every man. Without that spirit as the basis of his existence, no man could be.

"Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

Because he had told them the truth,—they not only reviled him, contradicted, and slandered him, but they would kill him. And such is apt to be the fate of

[1] For a fuller discussion see, *A Search After Ultimate Truth,* Chapter XVI, "Existence."

[2] This expression, "I am," as here used by Jesus, means, "*I exist.*" When the verb "to be" has this emphatic meaning it is accented in the Greek, while it is without accent when used to introduce a predicate noun. It is without accent, for example, in John vi. 35, "I am the bread of life"; also in John x. 7, 11; xiv. 6; xv. 1. In John viii. 24 and 28 and in xiii. 19 we find the unaccented form in the text but the emphatic form given as an alternate reading. To me the emphatic rendering is preferable in these places.

those who speak the absolute truth. And what wonder that it was much more the fate of Jesus who spoke the truth as no one else has spoken it! This was what he had prophesied: that they should kill him. He knew his fate beforehand. Such knowledge is beyond reach of the human intellect; it comes only to the spiritual understanding.

And so before Abraham existed, the "I AM" existed. And nowhere do we find the meaning of this better expressed than in the words at the beginning of this Gospel. We have quoted these before but they will well bear repetition. According to the Revised Version with Margin, they read:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

"All things were made by or through Him; and without Him was not anything made.

"That which hath been made was life in Him; and the life was the light of men."

This Life is the Light that lighteth every human being that has ever come into the world. We may designate it by whatever term we can best understand or which means the most to us. We may call it, the "I AM," or the "Infinite Being," or "God the Father," and to most of us this last name is dearest to our hearts.

XVII

HEALING THE MAN BORN BLIND
(John IX.)

The ninth chapter of John is a literary gem. It is not only wondrous in the story which it tells, in the arrangement of the incidents, and in the moral lesson that it teaches, but it is in exact accord with the strictest canons of literature. The opening words introduce the whole subject:

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

"And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

"Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

"I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

The disciples of Jesus noticing the man begging by the wayside, and his blindness, conclude that his infirmity has been caused by sin, either the sin of the man or his parents, for they ask, "Who did sin, this

man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus gives the immediate answer, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents." It is not a question of *sin* in this particular case, that is, as we understand sin. A man walking on the slippery pavement may fall and break an arm or a leg. Do we ask who has sinned that the man has suffered this mishap? We do not count it as such, and Jesus here says that it is not. Certainly it was not sin that caused the man to make a false step and fall, and so we may rightly say that, in the generally accepted meaning of the word, it was not sin that occasioned this man's blindness. On the other hand, we know that *the truth* never caused a misfortune, but that in a calamity of any description, some error will always be found to be the cause, something that we may class as *the not-good.*

Jesus' answer particularly engages our attention, because there is a suggestion in it which seems a rather hard one. To many kind-hearted people it seems as a stumbling block, in the relation the words bear to God, —"Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: *but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*" We shrink naturally, and rightly, I would say, from the thought that God made this man blind at his birth, keeping him so up to the time when Jesus healed him, in order that His glory might be made manifest in him. We think, first of all, that such a thing would

not be necessary; and next, we think that we ourselves would hardly do a thing like that, no matter how much we might be seeking the glory of God. The whole matter, as it seems to me, turns on a question of punctuation.

The old manuscripts of the scriptures have no punctuation marks at all. So punctuation becomes a matter of interpretation on the part of the translator. If in this instance we change the period to another place, we get an entirely different meaning, thus: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day." This transfers the centre of thought from God to Jesus; from what God has done to what Jesus is to do. So the works of God are to be made manifest in this man by the action of Jesus the Christ. What are the works of God? Whatever else we may say of them, we recognize at least that they are *perfection.* Whatever discloses an error, whatever puts away a wrong of any description, affords always a clearer view of perfection. Therefore, whatever tends towards the revelation of perfection is making manifest the works of God.

Thus the meaning is changed entirely by merely putting the period in another place. "That the works of God may be made manifest, I, or *We,* as in the Re-

vised Version, must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." Or, the time cometh when the chance for that work is past, the opportunity is gone, and it never comes again in just the same way, because nothing in all God's world is ever exactly repeated. We must do the thing that is for us to do, *now,* at the present time, that is, while the opportunity is at hand, for when this opportunity passes we may not again have the chance.

Then Jesus says, "As long as I am in the world, I am the[1] light of the world." How long is he in the world? Let him answer for himself: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[2] These were among the very last words of Jesus, being uttered, according to our records, after his resurrection. The Christ is always with us. But how frequently it happens that the light that is within us is so obscured by the darkness of ignorance that we do not perceive it. This finishes the introduction to the story. The next item is:

"When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

"And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.

[1] "I am *a* light of the world" is nearer the Greek.
[2] Matt. xxviii. 20.

He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

It is a continual marvel that all the works of Jesus were done with such entire simplicity. And Jesus never performs any two of his miracles in just the same way. He never repeats himself; but whether he touches the lepers, or bids the ten go and show themselves to the priests, the result is always the same; in every instance the healing is accomplished with no pretense, no claim for greatness.

"He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." Immediately the question arises, "Did Jesus believe in and use material means in his healing?" We know that he did not even require the presence of the person to be healed,[1] as in the case of the nobleman's son. That was with him a secondary consideration. Yet there was something in his recognition of the circumstances which made him adapt his action, in every case, to the conditions present at the time. But did he rely on the material means here? I do not think so. Why he uses the clay is a question which cannot be answered conclusively, although there are plenty of surmises which might be offered. Then again, the man was told to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. Was it essential to his recovery that

[1] John iv. 46–54.

he should go to this pool and wash? Was the water supposed to have any healing powers? These questions remain unanswered.

As it seems to me, Jesus, in telling the man to go and wash in the pool, was simply giving him something to do. Here was something that the man himself might do and thus perhaps his faith in the healing be quickened. Even in the anointing of the man's eyes with the clay, Jesus might have seen that the healing would mean more to him if accompanied by some material means, for it is apparent that Jesus read the mind of the person with whom he was dealing. He would know above all others, that to some, oftentimes, help must come gradually, because their faith is weak. We notice this with many persons to-day whose belief in materiality is stronger than their belief in spiritual truths. Frequently in the performance of Jesus' so-called miracles there was something to be done by the one who was healed. The ten lepers who were healed were told to go show themselves to the priests. Certainly the mere showing of themselves to the priests contained no remedial advantages, but this, as I see it, was simply *something for them to do,* something to quicken or stimulate their faith. And so in this case there was given something for this blind man to do, and he went and did as he was told, and came away seeing.

As we have said elsewhere, Jesus does not put himself forward as if *he* did the work, rather he plainly shows that the healing is accomplished through the person's own faith working in connection with God. Jesus opens the way, allowing the person concerned to do the work, yet always with the help of God the Father. When he healed the two blind men he merely said, "According to *your* faith be it unto you";[1] and again he said, "The Father that dwelleth in me, *He doeth the works.*"[2]

The next incident in this intensely dramatic story is the most natural in the world. As soon as the healing of the blind man became known his neighbors began to talk about it.

"The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

"Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

"Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

"He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

"Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not."

[1] Matt. ix. 29. [2] John xiv. 10.

A simple narrative, told just as the man himself saw and understood the event. But he did not know where Jesus was. He had left him and gone to the pool and bathed his eyes and in the marvel of his recovery he had lost sight of Jesus. The people it seems were divided in their opinions concerning this man. That which had happened was beyond their comprehension. The matter must be looked into. So they brought him to the authorities, and that is the next incident in the tale.

"They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

"And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

"Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see."

His words are few and straight to the point; there are no elaborations and yet all the essentials of the case are there. Indeed, the marvelous simplicity of this whole story constitutes its chief literary beauty.

A man born blind had received his sight! One would naturally suppose that that would have been the salient and most considered point in the event. But human nature, then as always, is prone to all sorts of vagaries. With the Pharisees, the healing was not the important fact, but in connection with that healing

was a little incident which they magnified into vast importance, for they say:

"This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day."

As we may hold a coin before one eye and shut out the bright light of the sun with all its magnificence and glory, so these men in their narrowness held this one minor item in their minds to the exclusion of the great good that had been done. They judge from their own little point of view, and shutting out the recognition of the good, they instead bring in a recognition of evil. And so does the whole human race often thus see the evil, and examining that, although the good is right there close at hand, they pass it by without recognition. In this instance the Pharisees see at once a chance for condemnation. "He does not keep the Sabbath day." That was one of the ten commandments. So this is of serious importance to them and they therefore immediately conclude that there cannot be any good in this man because he has broken the Sabbath.

"Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them."

Evil is always divided, always of various opinions,

this one, that one, and the other one. So they question the man:

"They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet."

He answered from his simplicity, according to the common idea of the day, a day when prophets were extolled and were held up to admiration by the whole Jewish world as the example for conduct. Brought up as a Jew this was the best this Jew could say of Jesus, "He is a prophet." And we cannot find much fault with him that here in the first exuberance of feeling because he had received the blessing of sight, he puts this man on the highest Jewish height.

"But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight."

How impossible it is for evil or error to believe the truth! Indeed, the very existence of error depends on not believing the truth, for, when the truth is recognized untruth disappears; it no longer is. So they continued their investigation by calling upon the parents of this man.

"And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?"

"His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

"But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not; he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

"These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

"Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him."

Not much moral courage to be sure. Yet how many of us might shrink from public opinion or might flinch from the scorn and contempt of those in authority. These people did not want to get into trouble with the authorities; they preferred their son to speak for himself, thus placing the responsibility on him. This is not at all surprising when we realize how men are constituted to-day, and how they have been constituted all through the ages. But the Pharisees were confronted with an unexpected result of their skepticism. They had established all the more firmly the fact that this man was the same man who had sat by the roadside begging; the same man who had been blind from his birth, yet who could now see. They were thus in as great a quandary as before.

"Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner."

"Give God the praise"; or, following the Greek more closely we might say, "Give the glory to God." And that is right, give to God the praise for everything that is good, however little we may recognize him through whom God works, for all good is most certainly from Him. But they would not let it rest there; if they had, the story would have been different. They add, "We know that this man is a sinner." And how frequently this is the case! How often when a good deed has been accomplished there arises in the minds of the people in whose presence the deed has been manifested, the idea, "Why, how can this thing be? This man is a sinner"! In spite of the good he may have done, his enemies condemn him, and try to blacken his character before the world. But the man born blind resented that and he answered them:

"Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

He has expressed this repeatedly and was probably weary of this continual questioning and of being harassed by these men who were so unbelieving. Yet again they question him:

"What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?
"He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?"

Or, as in the Revised Version, "Would ye also become his disciples?" Ah, there was a sting in that, and they so recognize it.

"Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.
"We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is."

The man was irritated beyond his self-control, yet he answered them with logic that would have convinced any fair-minded person. But these men were not fair-minded. They were not seeking for the truth but merely for something which should condemn Jesus.

"The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.
"Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth.
"Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.
"If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

These are splendid statements and they ring with the truth. Here was a moral courage such as was not developed in the man's parents. He was indeed equal to the occasion, and his words must have carried absolute conviction if these men had only stopped for an instant to think, but they were so enveloped in error

that it was impossible for them to perceive the truth. Indeed it is very evident that they wished for no opinion other than their own. They were filled with envy and jealousy, and they were possessed with the idea that this man Jesus must be put down at all hazards. We know how they had been persecuting him for months past and how they had sought his destruction but recently at the feast. They were blind, self-blinded, by their own wrong thoughts and beliefs, their own wrong acts. They had put out their own eyes, so to speak, so that they could not see even the plainest truths. And it is frequently so, that men having made up their minds, having decided the question beforehand, are thus so prejudiced, so fixed in their own opinions that they are unable to change to any other point of view. Listen to their reply:

"Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?"

These proud teachers of the people to be taught by this blind beggar? No! They could not stand that and they cast him out.[1] To be cast out of the synagogue was in that day of vastly greater significance than we may now realize. It meant virtually becoming a social outcast. He was disgraced; was almost outside of the law. The man had received his sight,

[1] Or, "They excommunicated him."

but he had been rejected, even disowned, by his own people for defending the man that healed him. His fate would seem to mark the end of the story.

Jesus had disappeared since the man left him to go wash in the pool. The two became separated at that time and the man did not know where Jesus was. But this thing had startled the whole community; everybody knew about it. And now that the man has reached the lowest point by being thrust down as far as the people can thrust him, Jesus appears again; as we frequently find him doing when most needed. There was one sheep of the fold in trouble and Jesus went in search of him. The story continuing says:

"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?[1]

"He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

"And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

"And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."[2]

This ends the story, so far as the story itself goes, but there is one point in connection with it to which

[1] "Many ancient authorities read, 'the Son of *man*.'" R. V. Margin.

[2] "And he threw himself prostrate before him," is a closer rendering of the Greek.

I wish to refer. History tells us that the man and his family got into trouble, that difficulties and disgrace came to them. Some might say these came to them because of the healing of the blind man. Thus some might say that the good had produced evil. Had it? Let us see. The evil was there clearly enough, but where did it come from? If there had been no evil, no error in the minds of these Pharisees, if they had been good men and ready to seek the good, what would have been the result? The result would have been rejoicing over the fact that a sufferer had been healed. There would have been great gladness that this man who had not seen the light of day for all his years had now received his sight. Thus there would have been no attempt to cast disgrace upon him. It was not from the good that was done that the evil came, but it was from the evil in those who did the evil; all the difficulties arose from the error in the minds of those who cast out the man whom Jesus had healed. The evil tree brings forth evil results and the good tree brings forth good results every time. The teaching of Jesus, the acts of Jesus, brought forth only good results. The evil was caused by the error, or ignorance, if you prefer, of those who did not perceive the good and who would not believe in the truth. And so we have the enigmatical words of Jesus which follow:

"For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."

Which as I understand them mean: "I came to judge between the good and the evil; to uncover the spiritual vision to those who see not the truth, so that they may become even as the blind, so far as seeing sin and wrong are concerned."

"And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

"Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

That is: "If you were blind in the sense that I mean, you would be without sin, but because of the sight you claim to possess your sins remain with you." Self-blinded these men were, as I have said. And this was the judgment which Jesus came to render. He came to give physical sight to the blind as well as spiritual sight to those who were blind to the truth. The man by the roadside was healed of his physical blindness, and here were these others who claimed to see, yet saw not. Jesus wished to heal their blindness and to open their eyes to the spiritual vision. When we are in the wrong the first step towards the right is

for us to *realize* that we are in the wrong. That is the first step towards the correction of the error, and that was Jesus' mission; to open the eyes of those who saw not, whether figuratively, or literally, as in the case of this beggar-man who received the physical sight.

You remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." The light which these Pharisees claimed to be light, the light by which they claimed to see, in reality was blindness, darkness. And it was Jesus' supreme wish or desire that they might receive their spiritual sight. If they had but realized their own errors, then would they, like this blind man, have become defenders of the truth. Their spiritual eyes, even as his, might have been opened, so that they might see and understand, might believe in the Son of God.

"If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." Or, "If you were willing to admit your blindness, there would be some hope for you. But as long as you think you see and so assert, your sin remains." It was just as Jesus said; their sin remained with them because they would not open their eyes to recognize it as sin, but instead claimed it to be the truth. Thus through prejudice, we blind our own eyes to the truth

and we claim that we see the truth when it is only evil or error that we see. But Jesus the Christ is even to-day, through his word, opening the eyes of the blind, causing them to see the light.

XVIII

THE GOOD SHEPHERD
(John X. 1–21)

The parable of the Good Shepherd seems to be the best-known of all the parables of Jesus, and probably is the one most liked, with the parable of the Prodigal Son following closely in popularity.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

"To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

"And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

"This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them."

This parable is indeed beautiful from a literary standpoint, but it is far more than that, because the

story which it tells is most instructive and contains many great truths. We have in mind a picture of the Judean sheepfold as it was in that day,—probably a selected spot on a sunny hillside, secured by a fence of rocks, rude, but still a defense from the ravages of wild animals, with its entrance securely fastened. It was the place of safety; the place of security. We may say that the story describes God's kingdom; the kingdom of truth and rightness, of peace and joy and love; for I think that is the interpretation of this parable of Jesus. The "sheepfold" means God's own place, the kingdom of heaven; and "the door" is the entrance into that kingdom, and there is but one door. We are all seeking entrance there. The entire human race is striving to find this door, each individual in his own way, in the way *he* thinks is right. Jesus alluded to this a long time before, in the Sermon on the Mount, when he grouped all ways into two: one, the broad way, "that leadeth to destruction"; the other, the strait and narrow way, which is the way of truth and rightness, and "which leadeth unto life."

"He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

He who tries to get into the fold under false pretenses, who tries to possess that which, through his

own wrongdoing, he is not entitled to, is here likened to a thief and a robber. But notice he does not say that he that climbeth up some other way gains entrance; he merely states that he climbeth up some other way. That which he is seeking for,—entrance into the sheepfold,—he does not attain. It is only by the strait and narrow way of truth that we enter in there. We may pursue the broad way, the way of sin and error as much as we please, but it does not lead to the inside of the sheepfold. Evil, however we may look upon it now, culminates at last in disaster and defeat, at the final analysis returning to its own nothingness. Thus our thoughts about evil, calling it truth and thinking it truth, do not make it truth, any more than our erroneous thoughts about God change Him. Error always continues to be error. And so, according to that other metaphor of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, the evil tree does not bring forth good fruit. Only the good tree brings forth good fruit. It is the same doctrine that we have here in this parable of the Good Shepherd.

The strait and narrow way seems strait and narrow to us because of our recognition of our sins and errors or mistakes, because of the prohibition which we see in everything about us as the result of these very sins and errors, also because of the continuous admonition of that inner conscience residing in each of us, which

each one of us recognizes. For it is true that whenever we start in the way of wrongdoing, whatever may be our determination, whatever may be our reasoning, or whatever may be our ignorance, we hear the "still, small voice" of our conscience proclaiming, "*Thou shalt not.*" This voice speaks to each one who enters the way of sin. Though often imperfectly recognized, *it never fails.*

"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep."

He that followeth the narrow way, he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep. Whoever enters the sheepfold by the door, is *a* shepherd of the sheep. (The article "a" is closer to the original Greek than "the.") Whoever discovers the truth and lives it, is a shepherd of the sheep, just by reason of that. And though we have many teachers and leaders in the way of truth, yet even with all the help they may give us, it is the recognition of the truth in the heart of each individual which that individual must ultimately follow. It is that only which makes him the true shepherd.

"To him the porter openeth."

Here we have the figure of the one on the inside of the door, guarding it against all comers except those

who are entitled to enter. The doorkeeper opens the door to the shepherd and the shepherd enters in by virtue of his recognition of the truth. Therefore, whoever is true, whoever stands in the truth, or lives the truth, enters in, for to him the porter openeth.

"And the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."

The sheep hear his voice and they recognize it. "And he calleth his own sheep by name." We may lose much of the finer meaning of this story unless we know something of the customs of that time and of that country. The flocks in that country are not so large but that in many cases the shepherd knows the sheep individually and gives them names to which they answer. Bonar gives a beautiful picture of the Judean shepherd and his sheep: "We see a flock of perhaps threescore black and white sheep returning from the hillside where they have been grazing, or from the caves in which they have been sheltered from the noon-heat. Before them slowly walks the shepherd, staff in hand, not once looking behind him. The flock follows quietly, not scattering nor needing the rod or the angry shout. He and they seem to know

each other well, and to have mutual confidence. He who wrote the twenty-third Psalm must have known scenes like this; and still more he who said, 'When he putteth forth his own sheep, *he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him,* for they know his voice.'"

The shepherd does not drive the sheep out. *He leadeth them out.* No compulsion, no dictation, no domination; that was the way of the Judean shepherd with his sheep in those days, and it is still the same to-day. The sheep are trained to know the voice of the shepherd and there is no need of driving them. The way of the world to-day is to drive men to goodness, to drive them to right-doing, and right-living. The law of to-day is the law of compulsion. But the law of the Judean shepherd over his sheep was the *law of love.* And that law to which they responded is the same law of love that the Father holds over us. Jesus says in another place, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." No driving nor forcing in this, simply a drawing unto Himself. It is the call of love, but it is a love beyond anything which we have yet imagined or had recognition of. A love, the height and depth of which is beyond our fathoming, beyond our interpretation, though we come the nearest to it when we say that "God is Love."

"And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

In the morning the shepherd opens the door of the sheepfold and leads the sheep out to the selected place where the best grass is, and they stay there until the time comes for water. That is a thirsty land, for water is not very plentiful. Wells are provided, and the sheep are led from the pastures to the well. Each shepherd leads his own flock, always going before, always encouraging the sheep by his voice, but always leading them. And when they get to the well, perhaps other flocks are there before them, and they speak to their sheep and the sheep lie down, patiently waiting in little groups until their turn comes, when their shepherd goes to the well and fills the trough and calls his sheep. It makes no difference how many flocks may be waiting there; each flock knows the voice of its own shepherd and his alone, and answers to his call and to none other. When they have been furnished with the water, the shepherd leads them away, perhaps to the same pasture, perhaps to another.

"This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

"Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep."

Jesus here is referring to the spiritual being of himself, to the Christ within. Through the consciousness of truth, in Jesus and in each child of God, does the Christ shine forth. When Jesus says, "I am the door of the sheep," he means that he, the Christ, is the door of understanding through which the sheep must enter to gain knowledge of the truth. And the sheep that hear the voice of the shepherd and that follow him, are the ones who enter into the safety of the sheepfold. For the voice of the shepherd is the voice of truth, the voice which has been sounding throughout the ages, sometimes low, and sometimes loud and strong, yet always calling, calling the sheep to enter into the fold. And in a figurative way we may say that he who is now a shepherd or leader of the sheep has himself been at one time or another even as they, for I think that Jesus meant that the good sheep would in time come to be leaders themselves and teachers of the truth.

"All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them."

Here Jesus seems to speak with the utmost egotism, and yet, he is not egotistical in the slightest degree. Benjamin Wilson says, "Our Saviour cannot here mean Moses and the prophets, who were commissioned to speak in the name of Jehovah; but rather those re-

ligious leaders who 'shut up the kingdom of heaven against men,' by taking away the 'key of knowledge.' (See Matt. xxiii. 13; Luke xi. 52.) Such were the priests, scribes, and Pharisees." But how can we thus limit the sweeping statement, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers"? If we look at the original Greek we find no word for "ever." The Revised Version properly omits "ever." Further, if Jesus had had the remote past in mind, would he not have said, "All that ever came before me *were* thieves and robbers"? But the word is "*are*." "As many as came before me *are* thieves and robbers."[1] He is doubtless referring to the immediate past. This is the view of Bengel.[2]

"But the sheep did not hear them." In other words we may say: Those who came before me are like those thieves and robbers who tried to enter the sheepfold, not by the door, but by climbing up "some other way," but, "*the sheep did not hear them*," or, they paid no attention to them.

"I am the door: by (or through) me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

We have been accustomed to attach to the word

[1] This may also be translated, "*Many* who came before me."
[2] *Gnomon of the New Testament.*

"saved" the strict theological meaning with which we have been brought up from our childhood, yet it merely means to "keep sound" or "safe." And that is the purpose of the sheepfold, to keep the sheep safe.

"And shall go in and out and find pasture." We have said that the sheepfold symbolizes the realm of truth; that the way to the door of the fold is strait and narrow, and closely hedged in by prohibition because of the fact that evil is so apparent on every side. The storm-tossed mariner on the ocean seeing the north star can set his course by that. We, too, may see but one lone star of truth ahead, yet that is enough if we will but follow that. Thus we need at the start but one single recognition of truth, and having that, we shall go onward to the discovery of more and greater truths. If we but follow one item of truth, and follow that faithfully, we are led towards all the rest. Having entered into the recognition of even one truth, we have progressed by just that much towards the realization of all truth.

We cannot by any possibility imagine a prohibition with regard to that which is wholly good. If it *is* good, there can be no limitation. And having reached the truth along this seemingly narrow way, and having entered in, all else disappears from view except God and His goodness and His creation, which He said was "*very good.*" There is no prohibition of

any sort whatsoever in the truth, but we go in and out and find pasture everywhere, as we choose, and with absolute freedom. The whole limitless universe is before us; is open for our pasture, for our sustenance, for our most exceeding joy.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life,[1] and that they might have it more abundantly."

The word "life" in this place is a translation of the Greek word *zoe,* meaning the spiritual life, which is eternal, and in which there is no imperfection and can be no imperfection whatever. "I am come that they might have life, and might have it more abundantly." Or, as in the Revised Version, including Margin, "I came that they may have life, and may have abundance." We shall have abundance because, having entered into the recognition of truth we shall enter into all the glories of God's infinite creation by virtue of our inheritance from Him. As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and *all* these things shall be added unto you." The one great thing is to seek

[1] The Greek word for "life" here,—*zoe,*—is regularly used by Jesus to denote spiritual life. Another word,—*psyche,*—is used by him to signify material existence. For example, in John xii. 25 the word "life" occurs three times. The Greek word in the first two instances is *psyche* and in the last instance is *zoe.* For an exhaustive study of Jesus' use of these two words see *A Search After Ultimate Truth.* Appendix O, Section 371.

for the kingdom of God and to seek to be right, and then all other things shall come to us without our seeking them; they shall be added unto us. And remember, that the word "life" here, stands for the eternal, never-ending, spiritual life of man which Jesus spoke of as "the kingdom of God *within you.*" He never lost sight of the fact that within each person dwells the spirit of truth; in the inner temple of each and every being, *there* is God's kingdom.

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth (layeth down—R. V.) his life for the sheep."

The word that is translated "life" in this place is not the same word as is translated "life" in the verse just discussed. The life that Jesus speaks of here is the physical or human life, that which can be laid down or terminated, in other words the life which can "die." In verse ten, "life" is the Greek word *zoe,* but in verse eleven is the word *psuche* or *psyche.* Jesus uses the word *zoe* to indicate the life that does not end, the spiritual life; and *psyche* when referring to the material life, or that life which can be ended. Never, according to his teaching, can we part with that spiritual existence which is *ourselves,* our own *being,* the real *you* and *I.*

"But he that is an hireling (hired servant), and not the (*a*—R. V.) shepherd, whose own the sheep are

not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

"The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep."

The hireling, not being a shepherd and having no interest in the sheep because they do not belong to him, flees when he sees the wolf approaching. The hireling fled because he was an hireling and cared not for the sheep, but left them to be caught and scattered by evil forces. Remember that memorable night after the scene in the Garden and after the arrest of Jesus, when every one, even the enthusiastic Peter deserted him. They had not advanced beyond the stage of the hireling. They had been following their Master's directions but had not attained to the unselfish devotion of the shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. When left to their own resources they thought only of their own safety. The wolf had come and they fled, and there was not one left.

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

"As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life (*psyche* or material life) for the sheep."

The Revised Version of these two verses gives us a different thought and renders the words in one con-

nected sentence thus: "I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." Jesus knows his sheep as intimately as the Father knows him.

In that wonderful seventeenth chapter of this Gospel, he said to the Father, "All mine are Thine, and Thine are mine." Jesus knew the true, spiritual being which is of God, and which is the real being, and he said just a short time after he spoke this parable, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." There may seem to be failure and disappointment in reaching the sheepfold but somewhere, sometime, we are certain of reaching the fold, for nothing that is of God can ever be lost. And we know, because the teaching of Jesus is true, that there is that in *every* man which is of God. Indeed Jesus expresses this idea in the very next verse:

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring (lead—R. V. Margin), and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold (flock), and one shepherd."

"They shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd." In the Revised Version the second "fold" is translated "flock," and that seems

to be the better word for our meaning at the close of this story, because the thought of separate enclosures or indeed of any enclosure at all has passed away in the infinite freedom of God's universe. It is evident that Jesus means here that the time is coming when *all* shall have listened to his voice and when there will be but the *one flock* and the *one Shepherd,* all following this one Shepherd, which is God.

"Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again.

"No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father." [1]

These are wonderful words! Jesus recognized his power to lay down his life and to take it up again and through this he recognized also the great love of the Father for him. He laid down his life that the world might learn the lesson of immortality, and after the crucifixion he took it up again and proved that death is not death; that it is not what it appears to be. His closing words here are, "This commandment I received from my Father," and we remember that only a short time before this, he had said, "I came, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent

[1] The Revised Version is given for verses seventeen and eighteen.

me." He searched for the commandments of God and followed them; he studied the will of the Father and followed that at all times. He could well say, "Therefore doth the Father love me." And it remains for each one of us to walk in the way that Jesus did, to follow his teachings, and receive the infinite blessing of God.

But again there was a division among the people because of the sayings of Jesus. Some believed that he was mad and possessed of a demon, but others said, "These are not the sayings of one possessed with a devil (or demon). Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" [1]

[1] Revised Version and Margin.

XIX

I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE
(John X. 22–42)

"And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

"And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch."

Some time had evidently elapsed between the time of the parable of the Good Shepherd, and that of our subject in this chapter, though the latter seems in part a continuation of it. Apparently it was fresh in Jesus' mind, and presumably among his listeners on this occasion were also some of those who had heard him at the time he uttered the parable itself.

"Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt?[1] If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."

As has already been stated, the word "Christ," when used in the Gospels as spoken by the Jews, referred to their Messiah; the title was not used by them with the understanding that we give to it. The one who was expected by the Jews as a deliverer of Israel was not a redeemer of individuals or persons, but a na-

[1] Or, "Hold us in suspense." Revised Version.

tional redeemer, who should cast off the Roman yoke, set up the government of the nation in Jerusalem and restore again the kingdom to Israel. This was the idea that was in their minds when they came to Jesus with their questions; for this was the universal conception of the Jews in regard to a Messiah. We can easily see the great contrast between this idea in the minds of the Jews, and the thoughts that Jesus must have had in his own mind concerning his mission among them, and thus the extreme difficulty of answering their questions to their satisfaction. If he had told them in plain language the truth regarding his mission, as we understand it from our study of his teaching, they would not have understood him, and would have immediately rejected him, for they had no such conception of the Messiah that was to come. This, perhaps, is one reason why his answers to these questions seem more or less abrupt and even vague at times; he knows they are not ready for a plain statement of the truth. And so he speaks to them as was his wont in parables or allegories. Jesus again answers them:

"I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me."

He had told them many times and in such a way that they might have understood if they had been more

receptive at the beginning of his teaching and had looked for proof of his assertions in his character and in the character of the things which he said and did. *All* these bore witness and had borne witness of him continually, particularly his acts of healing, or those works which we have called "miracles." And that is one of the peculiarities which we notice as we follow the course of his teaching; they believed not even the works, because the recognition of those works seemed to excite them to animosity and dispute, as in the case of the man born blind receiving his sight. So Jesus continues:

"But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you."

"Because ye are not of my sheep." That is, they were not open to the recognition of the ideas which he was presenting, because they were followers of the then existent and powerful priesthood of the Jews. Their minds were so intent in that direction and so filled with themselves and their own thoughts that they saw and could see nothing else. Jesus resumes the imagery of the parable.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

A most impressive statement, but in this case as always when Jesus speaks thus, it is not of himself the *person,* the material man, that he is speaking, but of that inner spiritual self, the Christ, which he represents in his own individuality, and which is one with God the Father.

"I give unto them eternal life." It is the *zoe* or spiritual life to which Jesus is referring, the life that is without end, which continues forever and ever. We might say that Jesus' enemies were possessed of this life already, and that is very true. They did indeed possess eternal life, for it belongs by right to all of God's children. But they were so immersed in falsity, in jealousy, and in the erroneous thoughts connected with their own laws, that they had no recognition of Jesus' real meaning, and it was for this reason that they did not appear to be his sheep. It was like the woman's piece of silver, that, though still in existence, still there in her house and just as valuable as it had ever been, yet *to her* it was lost; and therefore, until she found it, it was of no use to her. Thus it was with these men. Not being aware of their real birthright, it was to them as if it did not exist. When Jesus says, "I give unto them eternal life," he means that he will *show them the way* of eternal life, that through their understanding of the truth they shall come into recognition of the spiritual life and their relation to eternity.

"And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

And he gives a reason for this, *because:*

"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

Jesus here expresses his recognition of the Father's absolute power, of His transcendent supremacy over all. "My Father, which gave them me;" they were his because they were from or of the Father. In another place he says, "All things that the Father hath are mine." In these statements is expressed the oneness of Jesus the Christ with God and with all creation. "And no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand," is the rendering of the Revised Version. This shows that there is and can be no separation between God and His children. And so it is that God keeps them, so it is that God holds them in the hollow of His own hand. And from all this we can but conclude that God's children possess the life eternal. *They are immortal.* Jesus then concludes these strong statements with that sublime declaration:

"I and my Father are one."

This is the great climax. That this statement stands here merely as the conclusion of all these wonderful

statements has been overlooked because of the immensity of its suggestion. Men have been lost in wonder and amazement as they ponder its meaning, and not understanding it, they suggest all sorts of possible interpretations of it. The positiveness with which Jesus announces his divine origin and that of every created being, as if it were a matter about which there could be no possible doubt, has been lost sight of by mankind. If we study his words we shall find underlying them the distinct recognition of the right of every man and the innate ability of every man to understand the truth. As Jesus said to the multitude on one occasion, his words being also a keynote to his utterances elsewhere, "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" And more than once he said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"; thus appealing to the perception, the understanding of mankind. He appealed to the consciousness, the cognition, of every human being that each should, within himself, find the rule of procedure which is the rule of absolute right. And so here he says, "I and the Father are one," and he leaves the statement without further explanation for all to perceive and understand. He offered this, as he did so many of his great rules and precepts, without argument, without discussion beyond a mere illustration of his meaning, for men to perceive and accept as they accept an axiom. Truly

"He taught as one having authority and not as the scribes."

"I and *the* Father are one." In the King James Version "my" is in italics, meaning that it was inserted by the translators. I prefer the rendering of the Revised Version and believe that the article "*the*" expresses more accurately the meaning of Jesus. Jesus never arrogates to himself one thing that he does not concede to every other being. As he said in the seventeenth chapter of this Gospel, at the termination of that most wonderful prayer where he intercedes for all that is good and right and best,—"That the world *may know that Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me.*" We do not forget that his experience transcends ours, but we remember also that one side of his character presented the appearance of common humanity. Therefore we have the right with due care and reverence to examine ourselves and see if we find within ourselves something similar to that which was in him. Although we exalt him to the highest place because of his marvelous manifestation of divinity,—for he *is* the Son of God,—yet he taught us to say, "*Our Father.*" And if we can truthfully say "Our Father," then we can say of Jesus the Christ, "Our brother," and we can say to God, "Thy children." And if all this be true, we can find within the deepest recesses of our beings, that which was like unto him, though it be

not so gloriously shining, so splendidly manifested as it was in him.

"I and the Father are *one*." I should like to give an illustration of this idea of the "oneness" that Jesus referred to so much. It will be again referred to later on in this book when we take up the prayer of Jesus in the seventeenth chapter of John.[1] There is the mystery of the thought and the thinker; there is the relationship of the thought to the thinker. The thought is in a way outside the thinker, a thing separate from him. And yet it is within the thinker, something which cannot be separated or divided from him. To be sure you may forget it, yet it is always there, and you may recover it by remembering. Here is a dual relationship between the thought and the thinker. It is at once a something separate and distinct from the thinker and yet at the same time inseparable from him, and indivisible from him.

A thought recognized stands before our mind's eye clear and distinct. It stands there as an identity, with an individuality of its own, separate and distinct from ourselves; separate and distinct from our own mind as we see it. But this is not all. We may communicate that thought to another. In materiality there is noth-

[1] For a fuller discussion of this subject see *A Search After Ultimate Truth;* chapters XLVI and XLVII, "The Universal Oneness," and "Jesus and the Oneness."

ing to illustrate it. You may split off a piece from a stick of wood. You may attach it to another piece of wood, but it is still a split-off piece. Indeed you may attach it to the piece from which it was taken, it is still a distinct piece. But although you have communicated your idea to your friend you have lost nothing. The thought has not itself been divided. The thought in either case is whole, complete, and distinct. There has been no separation or division of the thought.

Let us, for example, suppose two people, called "A" and "B" for convenience of designation. A has recognized some thought. He perceives it, and he expresses it to B. B recognizes it as a something separate and distinct from A and yet also an integral part of A. It appeals to B as a correct and true idea and he accepts it. He receives it into his own mind, and it becomes just as distinct a part of B, as it still is and has been, a part of A. Then, so far as that thought is concerned, A and B are one. Literally, exactly, in the full meaning of the term, they are *one*. And notwithstanding that, A has lost none of his individuality. A is A just as much as he was before, and it is the same with B. Each is as fully himself as he was before the interchange of thought. The process can be reversed, B communicating his thought to A, and A perceiving and accepting it. The result is still the same. Neither has lost any individuality of his own. B is B

and A is A. But still, so far as the thought is concerned, they are literally one.

Turn now to him who manifested on this earth more of the divine attributes than any other being of whom we have ever heard, and perceive how it is that the Father and the Christ are one. Yet, the Father is the Father, the Christ is the Christ, each in His own individuality, each in His own completeness, and yet, they are one.

Jesus never said, "I am the Father"; he never said, "I am God." He always recognizes the Father as distinct from himself; he always recognizes the Father as the one to whom he owes all that he has, and all that he is. He and the Father are one; literally of one substance; divided, and yet not divided; one, and yet two. And so the statement: "I and the Father are one,"—great as it is, becomes understandable.

"Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

"Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

"The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

It is not surprising that they did not understand him. But here they made a great mistake; for Jesus did not make himself God. To my mind, this idea was

the farthest possible from any assumption or claim of his. We cannot find any place in all his words where he says that he is God. They simply did not and could not understand him. But, as he sometimes does, he appeals to their knowledge of the scriptures, for he says:

"Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?
"If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came,
"Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified,[1] and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the (or *a*)[2] Son of God?"

It is evident that Jesus in verse thirty-four is referring to Psalm lxxxii. 6 which reads: "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High." In this place the word "gods" is used to designate judges of the nation. To the Jews in the earlier days, these judges were recognized as representatives of God. They stood to the people in that crude time in the relationship of judges declaring the right as between man and man,[3] and thus representing God. And so the probable meaning of verse thirty-six is,

[1] Or "consecrated" in Revised Version, Margin. The original is from the same word as in the Lord's Prayer, "*Hallowed* be Thy name." It means "to make holy."
[2] The article "*a*" is nearer to the original than "*the*."
[3] Compare Exodus xxi. 6 and xxii. 9, especially the Revised Version.

that if their scriptures called these men "gods," the Jews could not rightly accuse Jesus of blasphemy in claiming to be a Son of God. Then he again refers to his works, and I believe he alludes not merely to the miracles he had done, but to his whole course and career:

"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

"But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." [1]

Jesus here again alludes to the oneness of himself with the Father, yet showing by his words that they are two distinct entities: the Father and the Son.

"I and the Father are one, He in me, and I in Him." This is a most wonderful declaration and one with clearest meaning and without any mystery whatever, if we will but perceive with an understanding mind the true relationship existing between God and all His creation. And this view does not detract one iota from the reverence and homage which we should render unto God. Neither does it prevent us from regarding Jesus the Christ in his true light, as the one man of all men who taught the truth. Nay, indeed, it makes clear *why* he is the one man of all men who taught the truth and only the truth. It shows why he

[1] Verse thirty-eight is given according to the Revised Version.

is the one man whose teaching is without error; the one man whom we follow, and in following, know that we are pursuing the right way. It is because he was taught by the Father, because he was one with the Father,—the Father in him and he in the Father.

"Therefore[1] they sought again to take him."

They sought to arrest him, to take him prisoner. But do not make a mistake with regard to this word "therefore." They did not seek to take Jesus because of the truth he had told them, they sought to take him because of the evil existing in their own minds, and because of their own failure to understand the truth. It was not the good in him that made them take up stones to throw at him. It was the evil in themselves that occasioned that; evil is from evil always, and never from good. The good produces only good always.

"But he escaped out of their hand,

"And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

"And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.

"And many believed on him there."

[1] The Revised Version omits "therefore." In the original it is bracketed, meaning, "doubtful."

XX

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS
(John XI. 1–44)

John, in contrast to the writers of the other Gospels, does not record many miracles, but he gives minute and detailed accounts of those which he does relate. The story of the raising of Lazarus is more complete in its details than any other, though nearly as much space is devoted to the account of the man born blind. While the latter is closely connected with the incidents that followed, this one appears to be an episode complete in itself. We are introduced abruptly to the principal facts of the story.

"Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha."

The story of Mary and Martha is one that has been told over and over again. Few characters are so interesting, so pleasing, so vividly portrayed, and yet so like people of to-day, as these two sisters with their contrasting characteristics. It is almost universally accepted that their house was the one which Jesus was accustomed to frequent when he was in Jerusalem. And it is also believed that in that last fateful week which

he spent in Jerusalem, largely at the temple, his stopping-place at night was at their house. In the next verse we find a reference connecting Mary with other events.

" (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) "

In the last account of Jesus we are told that he went away beyond Jordan and abode there for a time. It is presumed that that was where he was at this time.

" Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."

We are here shown a glimpse of his intimacy with this family, and of his friendship with them.

" When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

Let me say at the outset that I do not think that Jesus here referred to any possible personal glorification of himself. It is probable that he wished to show the people, particularly the members of this household whom he so loved, the powerlessness of death over life. It would seem that he wished to teach them how the Son of God may be glorified by rising above death

and materiality into life eternal. If we accept the interpretation already referred to in regard to the expression the "Son of God" as meaning the spiritual being in each child of God, and if we accept Jesus' words regarding the relation of the Father and the Son and the oneness of the two, which he so plainly and positively asserted, we shall the more clearly understand the meaning of this passage. Any other interpretation will be misleading and derogatory to the high character of Jesus. Thus the passage might read: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the spiritual self, the Son of God, (and this might mean either Jesus or Lazarus) might triumph over death and be glorified thereby."

If this interpretation is not accepted we can but take the story in its ordinary meaning because the whole course of Jesus, as the story runs, would seem to indicate that he intentionally put off the healing of Lazarus in order to have the opportunity of doing the greater miracle. We know from the records that these sisters had sent for him in their distress and that instead of hastening to them, "he abode two days still in the same place." Why did he do this? We know surely that it was not because of any personal glorification of himself. We know, too, that he might have healed Lazarus from the place where he was, but he chose to wait, therefore we know that under all the

circumstances his reason must have been a sufficient one, must have been a great one.

Jesus had talked much with the members of this little household, and it is not improbable that he may have hoped, after all his teaching of the truth to them, that the sisters themselves might be able to prevent the death of their brother. For they had listened to his teachings in the sacred circle of the family, where he could speak with a far greater freedom than he could use when addressing the multitude. And so he by thus waiting might wish to give them the chance of directing the healing themselves. We do not know; we can only surmise.

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

Nowhere are the relations of Jesus to this little family more beautifully expressed than in this one sentence. Somehow we love to dwell upon the picture of Jesus' friendship with this brother and sisters. We feel that it must have meant a great deal to him as well as to them, and we are deeply interested in every word concerning them. We remember how, in the first glimpse we have of this family, we find Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to his teaching while Martha attended to the household affairs. And we remember how Martha, who was the elder sister

of Mary and Lazarus, came to him complaining that her sister had left her to serve alone, and desiring that he bid Mary to help her with the work. And then Jesus' reply to her, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." [1] Perhaps we have looked upon this as a sort of rebuke for Martha, and yet apparently Jesus had no partiality in his affection for the two sisters. He recognized the good in Martha, though some may go to the extent of saying that she manifested an over-zealousness in her cares for the things of this world. To continue the narrative:

"When Jesus had heard therefore that Lazarus was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

"Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again.

"His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

"Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

"But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."

There is a time for all things; there is the time for

[1] Luke x. 38–42.

work, and there is the time for rest. Jesus made a similar statement when he met the man that was born blind, "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." We must each do our work while the opportunity is before us; while the necessity for it is present; not waiting for another occasion, but working "while it is day," while we have the chance to do the work. Opportunities do not repeat themselves, therefore embrace the one that comes to you; do the thing that the hand finds to do *now*, not waiting for another or more opportune time.

"These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep."

He speaks of death only to speak of life; and this I think is a peculiarity of his, speaking of death only that he may affirm life. I do not believe that Jesus ever recognized death as a reality; at least he never recognized it to the extent that we do. But while he recognized and understood our belief in it, I think he himself always saw through and beyond it to the life eternal; the life that never ceases and that never changes. His disciples, however, were evidently misled by his form of expression for they say to him:

"Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well."

The Revised Version renders this passage, "Lord, if he is fallen asleep, he will recover"; according to the external appearance of things, sleep is an indication of an improved condition of the sick.

"Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

"Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

"And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

"Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, (meaning "twin") unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him."

The occurrences of the past two weeks and their influence upon the disciples are indicated by the above statement. Thomas by this remark, which expresses a sort of despair or hopelessness, shows that he recognized great danger for Jesus in returning to Judea from which they had but so recently come. And in that despair he says, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." Such a remark is frequently expressed by those who are so devoted to their friends that, for the sake of that friendship, they are willing to face even death. And so they go to the house of Lazarus and Martha and Mary.

"Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

"Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: (that is, about two miles).

"And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother."

This household was evidently one of considerable wealth and distinction. And with them, as with the whole civilized world in these days, and with most of the barbarous nations as well, the funeral and the mourning and the ceremonials connected therewith, were most important and they were continued for a considerable time. This family was visited by the neighbors and by the friends and acquaintances, who came to offer sympathy and comfort in a time of sorrow just as they do now, in our own times.

"Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house."

This is characteristic of Martha, for Martha was the active one, the one who was always doing things, bustling and busy. She goes to meet Jesus as soon as she hears that he is coming, bowed with grief, yet still looking to Jesus as the one who might help. Mary, with equal grief, perhaps even with a greater grief, sat still at home. And Martha greets him and says unto him:

"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

This expression seems to have somewhat of reproach in it. The sisters of Lazarus had sent for Jesus several days previously. And while they knew nothing of the reasons for his not coming, they did know that there had been with them an interval of great anxiety when he might have been there. And while this declaration seems to be filled with grief, it also implies gentle reproach. "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." And yet she adds:

"But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

If there was a tinge of reproach, there was also confidence mingled with hope. Here was the man who had taught them the greatest things they had ever known, who had led them above the level of the standards of life and thought according to Jewish ideas, into the recognition of something more and greater. So to this man who had done these many wonderful things, Martha makes this remarkable statement, "I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." And in these words Martha expresses a marvelous faith, a faith that in its fullness might well conquer all things.

"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.
"Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

She comes back here pretty nearly to the mental position expressed in her first words: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Now if Martha had had the faith that we would naturally infer from her own words as uttered in verse twenty-two; if she had herself believed in the truth of her own statement, it would seem that at least some element of rejoicing would have been apparent, but this appears entirely lacking when she now says, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Perhaps it was but the natural vacillation of a mind whose loss was too recent, whose grief and suffering too deep, to manifest completely the faith which in her inmost heart she really felt.

However, be that as it may, she in her last remark has given Jesus the opportunity to say the words which are the most sublime of all his utterances, words so majestic that they fill the mind with awe and yet so full of peace and comfort to all mankind that, during all the years since he first spoke them, we have clung to them in our hours of greatest trial.

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that be-

lieveth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." In one sense this glorious passage is the climax of the teaching of Jesus. It is a fit introduction to the scenes that follow later, at the resurrection and during the forty days when he walked the earth after his crucifixion. And if we unite with it the ideas but recently discussed,—the ideas which permeate all of Jesus' teaching, regarding the relation of the Father and the Son and the oneness existing in that relation, —this then becomes a universal truth applying to all mankind. For all this does apply to each one of God's children, setting forth that in each one as in Jesus is embodied *the resurrection and the life.* Thus *life,* though there be the appearance of death, continues to be *life* and that eternally. In other words, the reality of each individual, *the real you,* never dies. But poor Martha fails again to rise to the heights to which Jesus is inviting her, for:

" She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

" And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

" As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

"Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

"The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there."

Now when Mary came to the place where Jesus was, she fell down at his feet, in her grief and perhaps in her joy, too, at seeing him who had been so much to that little family. And from her lips escapes the same cry that had come from the lips of Martha: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." It was a sad scene as we picture it. Not only was Mary prostrate at his feet weeping, but the record says that the Jews who came with her were also weeping. And Jesus when he saw them weeping "groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,"[1] and he said:

"Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

"Jesus wept."

The human side of the man was stirred as it seldom was in the whole of his career. His affectionate nature was touched with sympathy for these sisters and their friends and he wept, but the weeping was of a

[1] The Revised Version, Margin, renders this: "He was moved with indignation in the spirit, and troubled himself." In another rendering we have: "He was greatly agitated in his spirit, and affected." Or, perhaps still closer to the Greek is, "He was agitated in the spirit, and troubled himself."

different kind from theirs. In the original the words, "Jesus wept" mean simply, "Jesus shed tears," while in the preceding verses the verb is a different one, meaning "mourn, lament, wail." We realize that Jesus could hardly have wept because of the death of Lazarus when he had said, "This sickness is not unto death," and "Thy brother shall rise again." Rather we are led to believe that Jesus was so affected by the sisters' grief that he shed tears, even though he knew that Lazarus was about to be restored to them. If Mary and Martha had shown less faith it might be possible to think that Jesus wept because of disappointment at their failure to understand; but I think that they really showed a great deal of faith. They had faith in his power to prevent the death of Lazarus had he been there. They had faith that "even now" somehow Jesus would help them. Nowhere do they lose faith in him. They do not quite follow him, but they say, "*Yea, Lord.*"

"Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

"And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

"Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave,[1] and a stone lay upon it.

"Jesus said, Take ye away the stone."

[1] Probably this word "cave" here means simply a place hewn out of the rock, after the manner of the tombs in common use in that day.

We may wonder why he said, "Take ye away the stone." Twice before this according to the records, Jesus had restored the dead. And many times he had done things almost as marvelous. Could not he who had done those wonderful things roll away this stone also? But he told them to take away the stone. In the doing of every task there are always those portions which seem to be difficult and those which seem to be less so. Jesus raised the dead. They could not with their understanding. But they could roll away the stone. That was within their province, and it was best for them to do what they could towards the accomplishment of the great result.

We should do all we can by our own personal efforts towards the attainment of that which we desire. It is true that one of the very greatest of Jesus' precepts is, "Ask, and it shall be given you."[1] But that is followed directly by other precepts, "Seek, and ye shall find," and "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Do not expect to receive without asking, or to find without seeking, or that doors will open without your knocking. Do *your* part. "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Thus there is always something for us to do, even though we may not accomplish the greater things. If we do not have the

[1] Matt. vii. 7, 8.

faith to achieve the supreme thing, if we ourselves have not the faith to ask of God and receive directly from Him, then it is for us to seek help through some one whose faith is stronger than our own.

Martha with her care and attention to details, and her practical knowledge, then said unto Jesus, "Lord, by this time he stinketh (smells is closer to the Greek) for he hath been dead four days." This was a perfectly natural thought, and yet how far she was from her own statement uttered when she first went to meet Jesus, "But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." And yet we need not be surprised. Even if, at the time of uttering these words, she had had, as she must have had, some little glimpse of their wonderful import, there had been enough in the interval to distract her thoughts from the great spiritual truth which they implied. They had come again to the grave, and in company with all the others; the conditions around her have occupied her time, her thoughts, her mind, to the exclusion of all else.

The calm and beautiful reply of Jesus to her is a wonderful indication of his gentleness, and yet there is a little touch of remonstrance in it, as he says unto her:

"Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid."

Here to me is the most impressive and solemn moment in the whole story. There is no ceremony, no expenditure of time; there is no hesitation, no waiting; and there is no audible prayer, just a simple giving of thanks for something already received, for as the stone was rolled away:

"Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me.
"And I knew that Thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me."

"I thank Thee that Thou *hast* heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always." Jesus had entered into the retired place of himself, and he had himself done what he tells us to do,—"All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, *believe* that ye *have* received them, and ye shall have them." That marvelous statement is here fully exemplified. "Believe that ye *have* received them, and *ye shall have them.*" Even unto the receiving of the dead back to life!

"And *I knew* that *Thou hearest me always.*" These words need no explanation, they speak for themselves; their meaning is plain and simple in the extreme. We recognize at once the absolute faith expressed in them.

They show that Jesus' faith was without limitation. Indeed his faith was so complete that he realized no words were necessary, but he spoke them because of the people around him that they might believe in him and the truth which he was sent to teach.

We are supremely thankful that the record of Jesus' words in these two verses has been preserved for us. They allow us to see into his method, into the way that he did his work, more than any other words in all the Gospels. And if with these words in mind we may picture to ourselves the scene, the tone of voice, the surroundings, and if with all this we can understand the other things he said which are more or less explanatory of these words, we shall come to a recognition of him and his work that will be priceless.

"And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth."

Again we picture the scene, how they stood by the open tomb; darkness only in there, and no sound of any kind. It was as silent as it had been for all those four days past, as silent as when they rolled away the stone, and yet Jesus did not speak to a dead man; he spoke to a living man. He did not speak to death; he spoke to life.

"And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about

with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

It seems as if it could not have been otherwise. Jesus had complied with all the requirements; he had followed his own injunctions and had believed without a doubt in his heart. He had himself had that which he told us to have and which we may have,—*the faith of God.* For Jesus, in his great rule for prayer [1] says, "Have the faith of God." [2] And, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." [3]

[1] For careful study, read *Ask and Receive.*
[2] A marginal reading of the King James or Authorized Version for Mark xi. 22.
[3] Mark xi. 23, 24. Revised Version.

XXI

THE PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM
(John XI. 45–57; John XII. 1–19)

It is now generally accepted that the Gospels were not written as stories or biographies, but as teachings, each one being written for the purpose of showing the truths which Jesus taught, and so varying one from another. The Book of John, the last one of the Gospels to be recorded, seems to have been written with the idea of supplying some things which were not included in the previous accounts, and also for the purpose, as we have seen, of emphasizing certain specific truths. So John omits much that is in the other Gospels. Perhaps we may say that his Gospel comes to more or less of a culmination in the miracle of the raising of Lazarus. From that time on, the narrative proceeds with great rapidity until the story of the Last Supper, which is given in great detail in this Gospel, containing much that is not included in the others. Here at the close of the story of the raising of Lazarus, we find immediate results stated by John.

"Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

"But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done."

The result of this news carried to the chief priests and Pharisees, was that a council was called, and the determination to get rid of Jesus deeply intensified. They had really followed his doings from the first, becoming more and more distrustful and antagonistic, and as we have found, at the last determined to find some way of disposing of him. This council is supposed to have been an irregular meeting of the Sanhedrin. We have brief mention of the proceedings at that time, for instance:

"What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.
"If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

The possibility that "all men will believe in him" seemed to them the lesser evil, though that was bad enough, but the idea that loomed largest in their minds was a purely political one, that "the Romans will come and take away our place and nation." The preservation of their own place and power was to them the most important consideration, and was one of the chief things which most blinded them to the teaching of Jesus, as we must always bear in mind. These men, you remember, thought that the Messiah who was to come was to set up a new kingdom of the Jews which should relieve them of all foreign oppression and which should reëstablish the glory of David and of Solomon.

Hence this political view, which so obsessed them that they overlooked entirely the character of Jesus' teaching. They recognized that all they had done thus far had availed nothing. This last great miracle was a work of wonder which was arousing the attention of all the people. Thus the conditions were getting serious; something must be done.

"And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

"Nor consider that it is expedient for us (*you* —R. V.), that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

You see, the question of morality, the question of right and wrong, does not enter into his thoughts. It is with him purely a political question,—the salvation of the nation, and that he, a politician, should maintain himself in office and power. This is an illustration of the lack of wisdom frequently found in connection with the plans and desires of politicians. And history shows us that the very thing which hastened the destruction not only of Jerusalem, but of all Judea, was the course which these men pursued towards Jesus. That which they most wished to avoid was brought about, to a considerable degree, by their treatment of him. As I see it, the matter here resolves itself into merely a question of politics. These men would lose

their place, the nation would be destroyed, if the teachings of Jesus were allowed to continue. That was the prominent point in the mind of this high priest, Caiaphas. But his language was capable of an interpretation which he himself did not dream of. The disciples afterwards recognized this and placed other interpretations on it.

"And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

"And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

"And this spake he not *from* himself" is the rendering of the Greek. That is, the idea was not really his. He spoke more truly than he knew. The contrast between the intended meaning of the words as spoken by Caiaphas and this interpretation as understood by John, and by the other disciples afterwards, is indeed great, as great as the contrast between light and darkness. That the high priest could have had this meaning in mind, as here interpreted by John, seems to be absolutely impossible, because:

"From that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

"Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the

wilderness, into a city called Ephraim,[1] and there continued with his disciples."

He stayed there until the Jewish passover was near at hand. This was the great annual festival when every Jew recognized the obligation to go up to Jerusalem and worship at the temple, and many went up before the passover, "to purify themselves." For the Jewish law with regard to personal purity being very strict, it was obligatory upon a large number of people that they should be purified before they could worship at the feast.

So this large company poured into Jerusalem from the north, south, east, and west, until every place was filled and the city was crowded. It was also a time of holiday jollity and of meetings among friends. We must remember that all this time the country was being agitated over the question as to who Jesus was; and the whole country was ringing with the news of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It is true, Jesus had before this raised two others from the dead; but Lazarus was a man of more or less social importance, living nearer the heart of the Jewish nation, therefore this miracle was something which could not be denied. It had been publicly accomplished; it was not done in a corner, so to speak, as might have been said of the

[1] A little village in the neighborhood of Bethel, said to be about twenty miles north of Jerusalem.

widow's son or of Jairus' daughter. Lazarus had indeed been raised from the dead; it was a fact, something beyond question.

"Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?"

If he should stay away their plans would fail; but if he should come, it would indicate the will of a man resolved not to be swerved from his purpose. Would he come or not? And if he was to be that Messiah who was to lead the people out of Roman bondage making of them a great nation, would he do it now, or would he wait? While these questions agitated the people, they disturbed also the chief priests and Pharisees.

"Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him."

They had attempted to take him before, but they were cautious. They did not want to seize him in the midst of an assembly, because the sentiment in his favor was too strong for that. They wished to proceed in a quiet way so that there should be no uprising. But Jesus was one of a considerable company, as was perfectly natural, since they were coming to

Jerusalem from beyond the Jordan. They came openly; without commotion, yet without secrecy.

"Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

"There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment."

As some records render it, "A pound of balsam of genuine spikenard, of great price." This was one of the most valuable perfumes known in all the East at that time. It was used by potentates, by people of great importance, and was held in high esteem by the Romans. This pure spikenard which Mary used was very costly, being worth a year's labor or more to any ordinary man in those days.

"Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

"Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

"This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag (or box), and bare what was put therein."

John is the only one who makes such a remark about

Judas as this here. The others mention him by name and state that he betrayed the Master, but that is all.

"Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

"For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always."

"Against the day of my burying," or more accurately, "against the day of my preparation for burial, when my body is being prepared for the tomb, hath she kept this." Three different times Jesus had told his immediate disciples that he was going away. And so, as far as he was concerned, this was the opportunity to render a service unto him. "For the poor ye have always with you"; that is, "if to give to the poor is your desire, you can assist them at all times."

How far Mary recognized the situation, or had in mind Jesus' prediction with regard to his fate, we do not know, but most probably this act was merely one of humble service on her part, rendering honor and reverence to this man who had taught her great truths, and who had raised her brother from the dead. We do, however, realize that it was a remarkable expression of respect and devotion. But Jesus himself saw in her act, whether or not she so understood it, somewhat of preparation for the events that were to come. The rebuke to Judas, so far as it was a rebuke, was but a mild one.

"Much people (the common people—R. V.) of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead."

This was but a natural curiosity, the curiosity to see the man who had been dead and now was alive. The people wished to decide for themselves whether or not it was really true that Lazarus lived.

"But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

"Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus."

So intense was their feeling, that they included even Lazarus in their hate; they wished to get him out of the way also.

The next day Jesus went to Jerusalem, two miles farther. He had come to his friends in Bethany in the daylight. He had come openly, though not ostentatiously. The people had come out from Jerusalem to be there at Bethany to see him and to see Lazarus and to know what was going on. Thus they knew all his plans, for they were not hidden.

"When the people heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him." According to the Revised Version, "A *great multitude* went forth to meet him, cry-

ing, Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."

"And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon."

John narrates this a little differently from the others. As he tells the story it would seem almost that Jesus was taken by surprise when he found so many people coming, that he himself sought for an ass to ride on, and not that it was made ready for him beforehand.[1] And then what our narrator introduces next is, I think, most impressive:

"As it is written,
"Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt."[2]

The word "fear" as used here seems strange because of the fact that the passage in Zechariah, which is the one evidently referred to, reads, "*Rejoice greatly.*" Yet the word "fear" is not inappropriate as an expression of the thoughts and ideas of the people in those old days of the Old Testament. In the Psalms we read that, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."[3] The Lord, the God of the Old Testament, was a being to be feared, and every-

[1] Matt. xxi. 1–11; Mark xi. 1–10; Luke xix. 28–40.
[2] Zech. ix. 9.
[3] Psalm cxi. 10.

thing in connection with Him was feared. Indeed fear was the chief thing in the relations of the people to the God of those days. And among those Eastern nations, in those early times, even the thought of their king brought fear to all the people; for he came in all pride and pomp, his sword by his side, sitting on his war horse, exerting tyranny on every hand and instilling fear in the hearts of the people.

But here comes Jesus under conditions the exact opposite of those; riding an ass's colt he comes,—looked upon in those days as the animal of peace; without any of the trappings of royalty, without guards, without any of the appurtenances of war; his followers trudging along by his side on foot. *So he comes!* And fear vanishes. That was the mission of Jesus,—to destroy fear, to put away fear from all hearts. You know his relation to his disciples on all occasions. "It is I; be not afraid," he said to them. And so always he taught by the power of love and not fear.

"These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

"The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

"For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle."

John's story at this point is very simply and briefly told, while the other Gospels narrate a little more of the details of this entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. In Luke we find the story told thus: "As the disciples were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way." In the enthusiasm of the moment, they, according to one rendering, "spread their garments on the road," as we might place carpets for one whom we wished to honor. "And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."

Or, as given in John, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." "Hosanna" means simply, "Save, we pray thee"! The word is now used as an exclamation of praise to God, but in its original meaning it was used in the sense of an invocation of God's help and blessing. The words as here given were from one of the chants used in the temple on the occasion of the great feasts,

when the priests read and the people responded. Thus these rejoicings voiced by the multitude at this time were of this sort largely, and were the natural outbursts of this great gathering of people, many of whom thought that in Jesus they were welcoming him who was to be their king, even as Solomon in all his glory had been. Yet not all looked upon Jesus thus.

Returning again to Luke's version we read: "And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, (be silent—Greek) the stones would immediately cry out. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it."

The whole city of Jerusalem lay before him. This city was "built on four hills and surrounded on three sides by a valley, which was environed with hills." It must have been an imposing sight from where Jesus beheld it, with its shining great temples, its towers and palaces, but we read that Jesus wept over it. Not simply did he shed tears, but he cried in anguish and with expressions of grief, the outcries of a man in agony. The Greek word for "wept" in this place is not the same word that was used when Jesus is said to have wept at the tomb of Lazarus. It means that he lamented. You remember that a little earlier in his teaching he had said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which

killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." [1]

So Jesus, beholding this city, as Luke says, wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench [2] about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground,[3] and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." [4]

What a solemn prophecy and what a climax for such an occasion! Jesus held as a king and deliverer by the multitude, yet scorned and crushed by the Pharisees. And what a spectacle must this have been! Jesus weeping over the sight of the glories of that city which he loved and which he had tried to save from

[1] Luke xiii. 34, 35.
[2] A "bank or palisade"—Revised Version.
[3] "Shall dash thee to the ground"—Revised Version.
[4] Luke xix. 41–44.

destruction; and whose people he had so yearned over and had so desired to acquaint with the truth.

So he arrived in the city. He went about and saw the place much as a stranger might have done. He no longer was a target for the eyes of the multitude, but just a man as other men, walking about the city. Yet it must have been with a heavy heart. And the Pharisees, intensified in their antagonism, said among themselves, as in conclusion we return to John's account:

"Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him."

After a little time, this plain, simple man, for he was again a common man of the people, went out to the house of his friends, Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary, and remained there that night. The next morning he came again to Jerusalem and went to the temple, and standing there in one of the great porches, he talked to the people. Thus matters went on for two or three days; Jesus there among them, and going in and out before them, questioned by the people and answering their questions, and presenting some of the greatest and most wonderful truths in all his teachings.

XXII

EVENTS OF THE LAST WEEK
(John XII. 20–50)

This last week, at least a portion of it, was one of intense activity for Jesus. He was daily in the temple talking to all those who wished to listen to him, each night returning to the little family in Bethany whose lives he had so blessed. Some of his most wonderful teaching was given during this time, but John says nothing about it, proceeding immediately to the narration of some of the events which occurred in the interval between his public entry and the Last Supper.

"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:

"The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus."

It was not surprising that any strangers in Jerusalem should desire to see Jesus, because there was much curiosity concerning him, and probably there was no other man in the city at that time more accessible than he. Any one could find him in the temple,

probably in the Court of the Gentiles which was open to all comers, and it was very likely there that his teaching took place. So Andrew and Philip take the message to Jesus:

"And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."

We know that he spoke of his crucifixion as a glorification. He evidently recognized that there was soon to be an end to his teaching and preaching, that soon his freedom was to be taken away from him. He had come there to Jerusalem under great stress of circumstances, after having crossed the Jordan to avoid the difficulties which the priests and scribes wished to force upon him.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

There was evidently the thought of his own death in his mind when making this statement. In the Revised Version the passage is rendered: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." It abideth alone,—separate, distinct, by its material self; and that is the end of it, that is, nothing more comes of it. But if it falls into the ground it renews its life

and bringeth forth much fruit. The wheat, the kernel of grain, in this illustration, represents or stands for a material thing. It represents materiality just as we in our physical bodies represent the material self, the part of us which dies. Yet within us, as within the grain of wheat, is the germ of another and a higher life. And by the death of materiality, by the disappearance of the external manifestation, there comes forth into being, into activity, that which before seemed quiescent or asleep but which is in fact, the real or spiritual life. This is the life that, existing in the plant, brings forth the stalk, the leaf, and the blossom and causes them to grow and develop. Jesus frequently, during all of his teaching, presents this idea that the material being must disappear that the spiritual being may be made manifest. And so he goes on in the next statement to elaborate this idea more fully.

"He that loveth his life (*psyche*) shall lose it; and he that hateth his life (*psyche*) in this world shall keep it unto life (*zoe*) eternal."

In this passage Jesus refers to both the material and the spiritual life. The word "life" in the first two instances is a translation of the Greek word *psyche,* meaning the life that has an ending, or the material life. In the third instance the word "life" represents the Greek word *zoe,* meaning the spiritual or the eternal life. In the Revised Version, Margin, the word

"life" in the first two places is rendered "soul," but is not so rendered in the third place.

Thus the *psyche* stands for the material self, and the *zoe* for the spiritual being. The disappearance of the material means the appearance of the spiritual. He who would preserve this material life shall lose it, indeed must lose it eventually; but he that hateth it, or, careth not for it, not becoming too attached to it, shall keep it until the eternal life,—which is the spiritual life,—is made manifest unto him. This is the teaching of Jesus all the way through, and he makes distinction between the two with absolute accuracy and faithfulness.

In this world we are pursuing mainly the preservation of the *psyche* or material life, yet the "psyche" is that which brings suffering, pain and sorrow, is that which may be lost, laid down, or destroyed. It is the *zoe,* or spiritual life, which is God-given and which can never be lost. So Jesus continues:

"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor."

In the interpretation of this passage the idea literally of *place* does not enter in. By following him, Jesus naturally does not mean walking after him, but he means simply obedience to his teachings. If any man

wishes to serve Jesus he is to follow in his footsteps by living the truths which he taught. "And where I am there shall also my servant be," means that the servant or follower of Jesus shall one day attain to his knowledge of the truth. But we must follow the same Light that he followed if we would adhere to his teachings.

"If any man serve me, him will the Father honor." The article "*the*" rather than "*my*" is used in the Revised Version. *His* Father? Yes. But *ours* also. Whoever follows the truth as taught by Jesus, him will the Father honor. We can imagine that Jesus paused at this place, as there is a break in the continuity of thought between this verse and the following one:

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour."

"Now is my soul troubled." Now is the *psyche* or material self of him troubled or disturbed. And we do not wonder that it was so. He had without doubt contemplated the great event which was so soon to happen, and he was human, "tempted in all points like as we are." Yet we know that he recognized the possibility of escaping from all the sorrow and suffering, the pain and disgrace, that lay ahead of him, if he had so desired. We know too that the spiritual

being of him, the Christ, was unaffected; it stood serene as ever. It was only the human self, the external man, that was troubled at these things.

"What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?" This last clause is treated as a question in some of the older translations and is so rendered in the Revised Version, Margin. Thus the passage may have two interpretations. If we use the interrogation point we may interpret its meaning thus: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? No, for on this account, that is, because of these very things, I came to this hour." On the other hand, we may use the period[1] and say, "Father, save me from this hour." The clause is then rendered in the form of a prayer or petition. This interpretation makes his soul seem more troubled and indicates his struggle. There is of course far less struggle indicated in merely saying, "Shall I say, save me?" than in the outburst, "Father save me!" But in either case his mental disturbance is of the briefest for he at once exclaims, "But for this cause came I unto this hour." Thus does the spiritual self of Jesus immediately triumph over the material and he rises to the magnificent heights of the next words:

[1] The Revised Version uses a period at this place, the King James Version a colon.

"Father, glorify Thy name."[1]

So victorious is he over the mere human self, so victorious over all error, that all thought of personal glory passes out of sight and he sees and recognizes only the Father, and the glory of that Father. Thus the thought of the personal self being so entirely absent, is it then so marvelous that there should come a voice from heaven saying:

"I have both glorified (it), and will glorify (it) again."[2]

The people who stood by and heard this voice were differently affected, some saying that it thundered, while others said, "An angel spake to him." Their spiritual ears were not open to the heavenly voices, so it is not strange that they should have variant opinions regarding this event. It is evident that they heard only a noise of some sort, but no words. Jesus heard the words and understood, and he thus explains:

"This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes."

Or, as in the Revised Version, "This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes."

[1] A rejected reading of the Greek is, "Father, glorify *the Son*."
[2] In the Greek this sentence reads, "I have both glorified and will glorify again." "It" in the Authorized Version is in italics showing that it has been inserted.

"Now is the (*a*—R. V. Margin) judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

Jesus is near the end of his efforts, the crisis is imminent. Yet he is of good courage, for he knows that a judgment of this world of materiality and error is at hand; he foresees that "the prince of this world," [1] —meaning the devil or Satan so-called,—will be cast out, will be overcome and destroyed like everything else that is connected with that world of materiality and darkness. And he knows that in that day the right shall prevail, and that truth, peace, and love shall at last be victorious. Therefore the spirit of him is triumphant as he says:

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

John takes these words literally, not perceiving their deeper meaning and accordingly states that Jesus is here signifying what manner of death he was to die. Probably Jesus *was* indicating what death he should die when he spoke these words, and we do know that through that death he reached, and will reach, all men. But beyond the mere literal meaning of the words, and deeper than that, with a significance vastly superior to

[1] "Ruler" is nearer the Greek than "prince." Some say the "ruler of this world" means Satan; some, the Roman government; others, the Jewish hierarchy and magistracy.

it, is the thought of the lifting up of the truth in every human being. And if the Christ of Jesus be so lifted up, as he is indeed lifted up, so will all men be drawn unto him.

But the people, as happened on so many occasions, caught at some trivial idea, and referring to their own laws,—as they were bound to do, for the laws were the only things they were really versed in,—said to him:

"We have heard out of the law[1] that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?"

Probably Jesus made another statement in connection with this one, referring to the "Son of man," else they would hardly have used this title. In John's report some of the words spoken by Jesus might easily have been omitted. Or, if we take the rejected interpretation of verse twenty-eight, "Father, glorify *the Son,*" these words "Son of man" may well have referred to that. Jesus then tells them who the Son of man is, yet not in the language they expected:

"Yet a little while is the light with[2] you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you:

[1] Psalm cx. 4; Isaiah ix. 7.
[2] "Among" or "in" you. Revised Version, Margin.

for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light."

Believe in the light of truth, believe in the spiritual light which dwells within each human being, that ye may be the children of the one Light, which is God. Their very questions showed that they were walking in the darkness, that they did not have the light of truth within themselves or had not recognized it as within them, and thus they continued stumbling on in the darkness, led by the scribes, the chief priests and the Pharisees, all seeking to save their nation and in their blindness seeking to save it through the death of this one man. Another rendering of these two verses, though with slight differences, is yet very beautifully expressed: "Jesus therefore said to them, Yet a little time the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, so that darkness may not overtake you; and he who walks in darkness knows not where he is going. While you have the light, believe into the light, that you may become the sons of light." [1]

"These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them."

Literally "was hidden from them" as in the mar-

[1] Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott.*

ginal reading of the Revised Version, or, a little closer to the Greek reads, "and going away he was concealed from them."

"But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him."

They did not believe in him because he did not walk in the way they expected him to walk, because he did not do what they expected him to do. He did not take the leadership and put himself at the head of the army. Instead he continued on in his own humble way. The narrator goes on:

"That the saying of Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?[1]

"Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

"He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.[2]

"These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."

As it is worded here, one would almost think that the Jews had a prearranged and avowed purpose in bringing about many of these difficulties, for the sim-

[1] Isaiah liii. 1. [2] Isaiah vi. 10.

ple reason that the scriptural prophecies might be fulfilled. But "that the saying of the prophet might be fulfilled" does not mean that the Jews themselves intentionally disbelieved that they might have a hand in fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. However, it is evident that John thinks God was using them as instruments so that the scripture might be fulfilled. Such an interpretation would be entirely opposite to our idea of God and His principle of perfect freedom. In all probability it was a mere coincidence, and they did not do this for the purpose of fulfilling the prediction of the Old Testament; but it simply happened that in doing this the prediction was fulfilled. And undoubtedly it is the same in other similar places which we notice in our study of this Gospel. These are apparently merely instances where the narrator has woven his own personal interpretation into the record as is not at all unnatural or unusual.

"Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him (it—R. V.), lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

"For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

How true that is on the part of many human beings to-day, as well as then! How many a person knows the right course to take, and yet takes it not because,

"it is not policy"! Therefore, those few of the chief rulers who really did believe in Jesus, would not acknowledge him nor proclaim their new-found truth for fear they would be cast out of the synagogue. It needs no explanation; indeed it comes too near home to us in this present age to require any.

John goes on now to record what probably is the substance of Jesus' last teaching, that is, his last public teaching, for he yet had much to say to his disciples.

"Jesus cried[1] and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me.
"And he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me."

Just as he said only a little later in his talk with his disciples, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." This is a declaration of the oneness of the Father and the Christ which we have already spoken of. And so he says here, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me." Meaning, "He that believeth in the Christ, believeth in God the Father." This also means,—He that believeth in the spiritual being, which is the essential of every individual, also believeth in God the Father. For, as we must always remember, Jesus did not claim for himself any one thing that he did not recognize as belonging to every human being by the divine right of that

[1] The Greek means "to cry out."

being's inheritance from God. Jesus is the Son of God, and he taught us to realize that we also are Sons of God.

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

"A light in the world that men should not abide in the darkness." It is a marvelously beautiful statement once we have realized its fullest significance. Jesus comes bringing a light into the world,—even the truth which he proclaimed and taught,—and he that believeth shall not walk in darkness.

"And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that (or that which) judgeth him: the word (or the truth) that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

No man ever was or ever will be saved through judgment or by condemnation. There is the condemning power of the truth and that is the only condemnation. The words of Jesus are the words of truth and as they illuminate our minds we shall perceive the true character of everything, and shall comprehend the real nature of evil as we have not done before. The light of truth will then shine in our hearts and we shall

know and understand, and so shall choose the right. For the natural, inborn choice of every man is the right, the good.

These words of Jesus like all his teaching are of the deepest and the truest philosophy that the world has ever known. It rests on a sound, scientific basis which cannot be overthrown. One philosophy after another has risen and spread over the world, and men have thought for a little time that each one was the truth, until another arose that overshadowed it; and so on from the earliest history until to-day. So must all philosophies fail that are not built on the firm foundation of truth that Jesus the Christ proclaimed.

"For I have not spoken of[1] myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

"And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

This is the farewell declaration of Jesus as recorded by John; here ends the public ministry of Jesus. Hereafter he talks only with his disciples, and yet in these teachings we have some of his greatest utterances.

[1] "From" in the Revised Version, meaning, "of my own will."

XXIII

JESUS WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET
(John XIII. 1–17)

THERE is an interesting historical parallel between Jesus and the Greek philosopher Socrates. Neither wrote a line. Both had more than one biographer. Xenophon in his *Memorabilia* gives us many interesting details about the life of his teacher Socrates. But it required the sympathetic understanding and insight of a Plato to do justice to Socrates' sublime ideas. So Matthew, Mark, and Luke give us a full account of Jesus' daily life, but John, ignoring minor details, gives us some of Jesus' loftiest and most inspired teachings, which the others omit entirely. After the teachings of Jesus discussed in the last chapter John proceeds immediately to the account of the Lord's Supper, omitting several minor events recorded in the other Gospels. He emphasizes the spiritual significance of the words and acts of Jesus where the others apparently failed to grasp them.

"Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart

out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

"And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

"He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments;[1] and took a towel, and girded himself."

Jesus knew that his hour was come and that he was soon to depart out of this world unto the Father. He knew that, as the Revised Version gives it, "He came forth from God, and goeth unto God." He knew that he was inseparable from the life of God, and also that "the Father had given all things into his hands" for his accomplishment. The idea to be conveyed in the thought of going from here to the Father, of "departing out of this world unto the Father" is not so much a question of going to a particular place, as of passing from one sphere or condition to another. It refers to the change from the physical manifestation to that of the spiritual; and by "this world" is meant the world of materiality and error, concerning which he had so recently spoken when he said, "Now shall the prince or ruler of this world be cast out."

[1] A closer rendering of the Greek is, "layeth aside his mantle."

And how John emphasizes the depth of the love of Jesus when he says that Jesus, "having loved his own which were in the world, loved them unto the end." This may be intended to mean simply that he loved them unto the end of his earthly career. It certainly does mean that, and far more than that, I should say. In the Revised Version, Margin, we find it rendered, "He loved them to the uttermost." And did he not love them unto the uttermost? For he himself said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And we know that his love, not only for them but for all mankind, was such that he was willing to lay down his life that men might know and understand the truth, as men had not known and understood it before; and that men recognizing the Light might follow it.

"Supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him." We must remember that this is not the language of Jesus, but the language of John, and that John is speaking according to his own understanding. He believed in a personal devil, and so he uses language in accordance with his belief. The word that is here translated "devil" is sometimes translated "accuser," "slanderer," and also "enemy."

What a sharp contrast is pictured here between Judas with the thought of betrayal in his heart, and Jesus

who knew that the Father had given him *all things*, and that he was come from God and was returning unto God. The consciousness of this marvelous truth in his own mind, towering above all lesser thoughts, adds a dignity, a solemnity and impressiveness to his actions which stand out very strongly at this time. Who can say with any sense of realization that the Father has given all things unto himself? Instead of this realization we observe our limitations on every hand; indeed we think we live in a world of limitations. Jesus perceiving those limitations and our subjection to them, yet knowing their powerlessness to bind us, literally accepted them for our sakes, that he might show us that they do not really apply to any one of God's children.

Luke does not mention the washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus, but he does mention a minor incident which is supposed to have happened just previous to this occasion. I refer to the strife which arose among the disciples with regard to the question as to who "should be accounted the greatest." If these two incidents are as closely related as they appear to be, the action of Jesus in washing the feet of the disciples is given an even greater significance. It is evident from this episode that the twelve disciples were still bound by the petty ambitions of this world, and the action of Jesus in performing this humble service must have

been to them a profound example which naturally spoke louder than any words. In the simple language of Luke we read: "There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And Jesus said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, (he who sits at the table and is waited upon) or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth." [1]

There is to be neither greater nor less, but the one who would be great is to be as the humblest, and he that would be chief as he that serves. And so Jesus says, "I am among you as he that serveth." And that was true.

Picture to yourselves Jesus rising from the table, laying aside his mantle and taking a towel and girding himself. The towel was the badge of servitude; it was what the slave wore when he served his master. He laid aside his outer garments, thus divesting himself of the appearance of superiority, if any such appearance there was, and he clothed himself in the robe of servitude, tying the towel about his loins.

[1] Luke xxii. 24–27.

"After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."

Wilson says, "The washing of the feet in times of primitive simplicity was performed by the host or hostess to the guest, but afterwards it was committed to the servants, and therefore was accounted a servile employment. At the time when our Lord performed this office, it was esteemed the office of the meanest slaves."

Thus this service that Jesus performed for his disciples was looked upon as work fit only for the lowest menial of the household. It was considered the most degrading work that the slave did, yet performed with such dignity and love by this man, who knew that the Father had given all things into his hands, and whose knowledge of the truth was such that he might have accomplished anything he had undertaken. Truly a wonderful lesson to mankind. We wonder what could have been the thoughts of the disciples. I imagine that Peter voiced them pretty well when he said to Jesus:

"Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"

There is much feeling expressed in this question of Peter's, spoken with his natural impulsiveness and with a keen surprise at this act of servitude on the part of

Jesus. In these few words he expresses his own thought of the superiority of Jesus and the inferiority of himself, as with strong emphasis he says, "Dost *thou* wash *my* feet?" In the original the use of the word for "thou," which would ordinarily be omitted, and the position of the word for "my," indicate that his question was very emphatic. And then comes Jesus' answer to the wondering Peter:

"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know (understand—R. V.) hereafter."

Another rendering and one that seems closer to the Greek reads: "What I am doing, thou knowest not now, but after this thou wilt know." And in the words which Jesus uses at the close of this incident[1] he gives a most conclusive reason for this act of his, as we shall see. But Peter is impetuous declaring with much emphasis:

"Thou shalt *never* wash my feet."

In the original this is equivalent to, "Thou shalt not *in all eternity* wash my feet." Peter does not intend to allow his Master to thus degrade or lower himself for him. We are reminded of another occasion long before, when Jesus asked his disciples who he was, and how Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the

[1] Verses 12–17.

Son of the living God"; and how Jesus, prophesying of his going up to Jerusalem and of his suffering many things of the scribes and Pharisees, told them he was to tread the path of sorrow and disgrace and finally be killed. Then this same impetuous Peter began to remonstrate with him saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."[1] And so now again, with similar vehemence he exclaims, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Then Jesus in his calmness answers him:

"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

Metaphorically we might say, "If I cleanse thee not, thou hast no part with me," or "nothing to do with me." And we may enlarge this idea until it includes every human being in all the world, because if we are not cleansed through the Christ then we have no part in the Christ. This reply touches Peter to the quick. Like many another person, Peter's heart was right, yet he was too easily carried away by his enthusiasm. He is an extremist, being never in the middle place, and so he immediately takes the opposite position and in his intensity says:

"Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

[1] Matt. xvi. 15–23.

"Jesus saith to him, He that is washed[1] needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all."

It was customary for the Jews to bathe themselves before eating the paschal supper. Therefore no person sat at the passover feast without having previously fully bathed. So when Jesus said, "He that is bathed, needeth not to wash except his feet," he meant simply that if one had been walking in the streets since taking his bath, his feet alone would need purification. "And ye are clean, but not all." Our narrator explains this by saying in the next verse:

"For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean."

That is, "You are clean, but not every one of you." Jesus seems here to be speaking metaphorically. Judas was not clean at heart, being evil-minded, because of his intention to betray Jesus. Evidently the others made no remonstrance; they had heard the conversation and accepted the situation, each according to his own way of thinking. It was a solemn scene. Probably a period of silence ensued, for what was there to say after this? We can but imagine that surprise and wonderment prevailed that Jesus should in their opinion thus humiliate himself.

[1] In the Greek the verb here means "to *bathe*." In the expression "to wash his feet," a different verb is used.

"So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?"

Probably each one of the disciples had a different idea regarding the proceedings, and very likely, as with Peter, each thought that the Master had humiliated himself by this act. And to-day, in the discussion of this incident, we hear much about the "humility" manifested by Jesus at this time. I do not believe there was one particle of so-called "*humility*" manifested in his action, or in his bearing, much less a sense of servitude. I believe he was fully conscious from the beginning to the end, of what he was, and of what he was doing; and that he sacrificed not one iota of his real dignity. He had a definite object in doing this. The act manifestly was performed with true gentleness and loving-kindness, and I do not believe there was a heart there that was not deeply affected. No, he did not humiliate himself!

"Know ye what I have done to you?" Or, "Know ye why I have done this to you?"[1]

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

[1] "What" and "why" are the same in Greek. If it means "why," "this" must be supplied.

"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him."[1]

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." "Master and Lord," or "Teacher and Lord," for "Teacher" is the rendering of the Revised Version. Here in this one instance, among all the records that we have of him, does Jesus accept this title of "Lord," always in other places, denying these or similar titles; but recognizing here his full dignity. He did this for the purpose, as I believe, of bringing home more strongly to his disciples the lesson that he would teach them, that the humblest service, even that which may be called the work of the meanest, or the lowest, has in it no disgrace, but rather is ennobled, if it is done for love's sake. And not only that, but when it is performed in this way, it is to be regarded as an action worthy of the highest and the greatest. Yet it is not to be done as a ceremonial, not as a formality, for in the ceremony and the formality, all the life goes out of a thing, and it is merely a form and nothing more. But if it is the service of love, as this was,—for John says that Jesus loved them to the uttermost,—it does not lower,

[1] See Luke vi. 40 and John xv. 20.

but instead ennobles the one who gives it. And so if this be true, this kind of service, one to another in brotherly love, becomes, one might almost say, a duty. And yet it becomes as well, a deep joy and a pleasure.

So these disciples were taught through the example of Jesus, how far astray they were in their strife for rank and position, in their strife to be first. As he had said at other times, "The last shall be first, and the first last"; and this was his teaching throughout. We find similar statements in Matthew: "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." He was continually teaching brotherly love and the oneness of all mankind. We know how it was in his teaching concerning anger when he said, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; *first be reconciled* to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."[1] "First be reconciled to thy brother" or "changed throughout towards thy brother"; and this really means, "be at one with your brother; be in harmony with him." And in this instance here of the washing of the disciples' feet, we have practically the same meaning, "Be so at one with

[1] Matt. v. 23, 24.

your brother that you can perform any service for him that you would allow him to perform for yourself."

And indeed *who* can claim first place, *who* can claim rank above another? Jesus himself was here, not as one who ruled, but as one who served. He was here on an equality with all men, claiming nothing for himself above others. He dined with the scribes and Pharisees, and hesitated not to tell them their faults; he dined, too, with the accused, with the sinner, or with the despised and forsaken, on the same level of equality. He did this because a great love towards all mankind was the basis of all that he did. And so in this instance he was serving in the lowest place because he loved his disciples and wished to see them free themselves from all those faults which he knew would hinder their work when he had left them. Also Jesus realized that he who claimed first place would sooner or later lose that position just by reason of that very trait in his character which had caused him to wish to be placed above his fellows. He wanted his disciples to be perfect. He wishes us all to be perfect, for did he not say, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

"If I then have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." Back of these words, we recognize the great principle of love which makes this statement binding, yet without bondage, for as Jesus

did this humble work and was ennobled thereby, so he would have us act and without the thought of any bondage in our actions. He would have us act always with freedom, and simply because we wish to. And so he closes:

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them," or, as in the Revised Version, "blessed are ye if ye do them."

The word that is here translated "happy" is the same word that is translated "blessed" in the beatitudes; thus we may include the meaning of both words in our interpretation of the passage. "If you know these things, happy are you and blessed are you, if you do them."

XXIV

JUDAS AND HIS MOTIVES
(John XIII. 18–35)

"JUDAS ISCARIOT, Simon's son!" Probably in all the Christian world no man has been so universally condemned, so universally scorned, so universally execrated as this man. For centuries, it has seemed as if men have deemed it their duty to hate him, even those who call themselves followers of him who said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Condemnation of another, merely upon appearances, seems to come to most of us human beings with remarkable ease. We observe the outward act, the surface appearance, and that being bad, straightway we issue sweeping condemnation. We are inclined to take the easiest way, and it seems vastly easier to condemn immediately than it is to attempt some understanding of the circumstances, especially the inner motives, that led to the act which we condemn. We appear to consider it our duty to condemn, at least in special cases, thus arrogating to ourselves a right which is the exact opposite of Jesus' teaching. Judas was a traitor, and humanity, without exception,

scorns the traitor. We have always assumed that Judas in his betrayal of Jesus acted from an actual wickedness of heart, a genuine desire for evil. Yet Judas was one of the twelve! We are reminded of the old story of the two knights who met beside a shield, one declaring it was golden, the other that it was silver, yet neither looked on the opposite side until after the battle. So here, there are two sides to this story of Judas; and as we recognize that there is never under any circumstances an appearance of evil without the good alongside, so also there was some good in Judas. Many authors have exhausted their ingenuity to make a devil wholly bad. They cannot do it. Perhaps John Milton was as successful as any in this attempt, yet no boy has ever read "Paradise Lost," who did not have some admiration, if a secret one, for Milton's devil. There is somewhat of good or of truth in Milton's devil, else he could not have conceived the character. And so Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, was not wholly bad.

We know but little about him; he does not figure very largely among the disciples, being mentioned but a few times in the different Gospels, and except at the end and in connection with this account of his treachery, only incidentally. The first mention we have of him in Matthew, Mark, and Luke[1] is when Jesus

[1] Matt. x. 4; Mark iii. 19; Luke vi. 16.

selects his twelve disciples, and in each of these instances he is the last one of the twelve to be listed, and is spoken of in each instance as the traitor, or the one who betrayed Jesus.

The first mention of him in this Gospel is in the sixth chapter, where Jesus after asking the twelve if they also would go away when others had left him, merely alludes to one of the twelve who would ultimately betray him.[1] Judas comes prominently into view for the first time in the story of the alabaster box of precious ointment, where John, in telling the story says, "Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein."

And so you see with the first prominent notice of him, he is called a thief, and we accept that without further consideration. I do not say he was not a thief, but this fact appears to be true, that he was the financial agent of the twelve disciples. The money that came to them was entrusted to him, and evidently the buying of the food and other things necessary for

[1] According to the usual translation Jesus is recorded as saying at this time, "and one of you is a devil," but "false accuser" or "slanderer" is closer to the Greek than "devil."

the disciples' use was left in his hands. One writer is authority for the statement that Judas was the one who looked out for "the upper chamber" and hired it. We have no indication or mention of his being a thief except what John tells us in the instance just referred to; and we know that even after this he continued with his work as the financial leader of the little company. To my mind this indicates confidence in him in one particular at least,—that of commercial or financial integrity.

The next we hear of Judas is his going to the chief priests to sell his Master for money; and then again he appears at the Supper. Later we find him at the betrayal, kissing his Master as a sign. And then afterwards, when his scheme had failed, we find him going out in the darkness of the night and hanging himself. A tragic personal history indeed! The great question is, why did he do it? Let us look at some of the attendant circumstances.

In the first place, all through Jesus' career, the Jews generally, and the twelve disciples in particular, expected him to establish an earthly kingdom. They were, as we know, expecting their Messiah to set up a throne in Jerusalem, and sitting on that throne, thus to rule the Jews, and restore again the ancient magnificence of the country, making it again a kingdom. These expectations were all the more intense because

at that time they were under the power of the Roman Empire, and the whole nation hated the Roman yoke.

There were two divisions in the country. There were those who hated with an open conviction and dared to express their feelings, and there were those who hated secretly and kept their thoughts to themselves and bided their time. These were the two political parties of that day. And as I have said, the disciples themselves joined in this feeling of hatred of the Roman rule. Somehow the Jewish idea of the kingdom of God, as a temporal, earthly kingdom with an earthly king, never passed from their minds. They failed to recognize that the kingdom of God of which Jesus preached was the kingdom within each and every being, as he had tried to tell them. The proof of this is found in the first chapter of Acts where is told the story of the ascension. They had met expecting something unusual to occur, and what was their question? They had waited and waited for three years or more; they had seen their king hang on the cross; they had seen him after he was risen from the dead; they had been with him for probably forty days, and yet they ask him, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

You see, the idea of an Israelitish kingdom was in their thoughts all along, and can we expect that Judas

was any exception to this? Scarcely. We have seen how at various times Jesus escaped from the presence of the people in order to avoid being proclaimed king. We know that even his immediate followers were in sympathy with this, for some of the records say that certain of them came to him asking for the highest seat in his kingdom, when he should have come into his power. (Even at the Supper here, that meal, that meeting, was pervaded by the thought of who should be first among them.) They were not thinking here of the kingdom of the spirit, for in the kingdom of the spirit, as we know, there is no first and no last, no greater and no less. So here was this prevailing idea, a national idea, which had even influenced the disciples themselves. And we cannot except Judas.

So they have followed Jesus along, conscious of the fact that he literally put aside the crown, not as Cæsar did with the idea of taking it up again, but with the thought and the knowledge that he should never accept it. That Judas was evidently the sort of character which we to-day would call "a man of affairs" is indicated in part by the fact that he was their financial agent. And we can imagine that, imbued as he was with this idea of a temporal kingdom, Judas had been repeatedly disappointed. For repeatedly the opportunity had come for Jesus to declare himself king, take the sword of authority, and put himself at the head of

the Jewish nation. And yet every time he had declined to do this.

Judas was, we may suppose, an impetuous, strenuous man, full of the vision of a political kingdom and anxious for it to appear; for in its appearance he doubtless imagined that he with the other disciples could take the places of prominence; and most likely he had the thought also, of the good that would be done in this kingdom with Jesus as chief ruler. Indeed, the disciple Peter believed that in the last emergency Jesus would act for himself; that is, that when the final crisis arrived he would defend himself and seize the reins of authority and would do the work which Judas and they all understood to be his God-given work and his special mission,—to restore the kingdom of Israel. And these feelings increased in intensity from month to month, and then from week to week, and now from day to day. Parallel with this ran the feelings of the chief priests and Pharisees, whose fear and hatred increased, for they saw that in the teaching of Jesus was the end of their authority, if he should be made a ruler. How long would it take a practical man like Judas to see in this his opportunity? Evidently the time had come when there could be no more open preaching by Jesus. The crisis was upon him. It only needed something to precipitate the final event. And what better thing to hasten

this could there be than the arrest of Jesus? A man looking at the subject with these ideas in mind could not for a moment imagine that Jesus would submit to arrest,—this man who had revealed such power, and who had accomplished such wonderful things. For remember, these men all believed that Jesus was to be the temporal sovereign. He would not submit to arrest; thus it would force the crisis; he would be compelled to act, and to act in the interest of his prophetically appointed dominion. Such might well be the thoughts of Judas. It takes no great stretch of the imagination to conclude that Judas merely wanted to accelerate the course of events and to bring to his Master the glory that he believed belonged to him. Under these conditions he merely used the chief priests for his tools; that was all.

Early in Jesus' career he laid down a general principle which you have heard over and over again. Told in the form of a metaphor, it nevertheless proclaims a great truth: "The light (lamp—R. V.) of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single (perfect or sound), thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" [1]

The light that was in Judas and was influencing his

[1] Matt. vi. 22, 23.

actions was the light of *this* world only, the world of materiality. His methods were the methods of this world, and, if you please, the political methods of to-day. Judas was walking in the darkness, believing it to be the light, because he knew no other light; what he considered light was but the darkness of materiality. Judas was not unlike millions of people to-day, who believe error to be truth; who believe darkness to be light. And Jesus said that if a man walked in the darkness he would stumble, and Judas stumbled.

To my mind, the significant, the decisive point in connection with this, is the fact that when Judas found that Jesus was delivered unto the Roman authorities, when he found that his scheme had utterly failed, and instead of bringing his Master to the throne, he had brought him to the cross,—that Master whom he loved, as I believe he did love him,—he did not do the deed of a hardened man, nor even that of a rascal, he simply went back to those men and flung their silver in their faces. He wanted none of that because that was not what he was after. Had he been a thoroughly bad man he would have kept the silver. He flung the silver in their faces and went out and hanged himself. I do not say this is the explanation; I merely say it is plausible. And I present this statement of Judas' side of the case, that possibly we may be aided thereby in following Jesus' precept, "*Judge not.*"

To return to the story of the Last Supper, Jesus says:

"I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.[1]

"Now I tell you before it come (to pass—R. V.), that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that *I am* (he)."

"He" does not occur in the original Greek, being inserted here by the translators. It is omitted in the Revised Version, Margin. Thus we may use the emphatic ending "I am"[2] and it certainly seems preferable at this place to the rendering "I am he." Jesus is probably referring here to his coming crucifixion, and if that is so, it is as if he said, "I tell you now before it happens, that when it has happened you may believe that *I am,* that *I exist,* or in other words that *I still live.*"

Even the most common meal in the East is a sacred affair. To this day, and even among the robbers of the desert, a man is protected if he but break bread with another. And here, Jesus says that one who had sat at table with him, who had partaken of bread with him, was to betray him. The record continues:

[1] Psalm xli. 9.
[2] "I Am" is an expression of existence.

"When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

This occurred as they reclined at the table and probably after Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet, but just where it came in we do not know, for John does not tell us about the breaking of bread, though we surmise that it was in the midst of that solemn part of the feast. The disciples had not understood Jesus when he made reference to the fact that one of their number was to betray him and they did not understand him now. And so we can imagine how they looked at one another, each asking in his own heart, "Who is it?" They had absorbed somewhat of the spirit of the occasion, and this statement from their Master must have been one to fill them all with wonder and alarm.

"Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved."

In the Revised Version this reads, "There was at the table reclining in Jesus' bosom one of his disciples." They did not sit at the table as we do, but "they reclined on a couch, or couches, each resting on his left elbow with the right arm free, and with his feet sloping away from the table towards the back of the couch, so he that turned his back on his next neigh-

bor was said to be 'lying in his bosom.'" Thus the man "leaning on Jesus' bosom" was the man immediately in front of him, and is supposed to have been John, the disciple so often spoken of as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." This position would make it easy for John to speak to Jesus in a whisper which could not be heard by the other disciples.

"Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake."

Who is it that is to betray him? John, in his close proximity to the Master, had but to turn his face a little and whisper, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus did not give a direct answer, but said:

"He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it."

The "sop" usually consisted of a piece of the flesh of lamb and a piece of unleavened bread, mixed with bitter herbs. Another part of the feast was a dish of broth or a sort of thick sauce; this might be merely vinegar with water in it, or it might be composed of vinegar, figs, dates, almonds, and spices mixed together to a stiff consistency. Thus a portion of lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs, was taken by the master of the feast and dipped into the sauce, and this was handed in succession to each one seated about the

table. This was but one of the regular courses of the meal.

"And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

"And after the sop Satan[1] entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

"Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him."

The disciples were apparently in ignorance of Judas' proposed treachery. At any rate it would appear that only John, and possibly Peter, heard what Jesus had said regarding who it was that should betray him. Otherwise they might have known, but they did not know. At least as the narrative shows, they did not understand the purport of Jesus' words when he said, "That thou doest, do quickly."

"For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

"He then having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night."

This last declaration seems one of much significance, for it was indeed night in Judas' mind; it was night in his understanding. To all appearances his light had gone out and he walked in darkness, not seeing the

[1] This, we must remember, was John's own statement, and also that "Satan" is sometimes translated "the adversary."

way. But note the position taken by Jesus. Only a short time before he had brought the dead to life. And with this infinite power which he possessed, he had only to lift a finger and Judas would have stood there before him immovable; he had only to say a word and Judas would have been powerless. But shall this man who had told the world not to resist evil, himself offer resistance? Was he to disobey his own precept? For to have hindered Judas would have been to resist the evil. Shall this man who taught the principle of freedom as no other man has ever taught it, hinder the action of any man; shall he dominate another? *No!* And he did not; not even in the supreme hour, when, with a little exercise of his authority, he might have stopped it all. He, in the sublimity of his own character, resisted not the evil, but remained true to his teaching of absolute freedom, that freedom which is the right of each individual. Truly indeed is the "Son of man glorified" as the next verse states:

"Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

"And God shall glorify him in Himself, and straightway shall He glorify him.[1]

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you."

[1] The Revised Version is used in verse thirty-two as its meaning seems more clearly rendered than in the King James Version.

He is going away. The solemnity of this moment is beyond the power of the imagination. And what is his next instruction, within a very few moments after Judas had left on his errand of perfidy, which Jesus knew would result in his death on the cross? If ever there was a place for hate, if ever there was a place for revenge, or for retribution even, surely it was here on this occasion, but instead we have these words:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

What marvelous words to follow so closely the moment of his betrayal! And then,

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

And this is the epitome and the culmination of Jesus' teaching, repeated again two chapters farther on in this same Gospel, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

And as complement and fulfillment of this we have John's words: "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." [1]

[1] 1 John iv. 12.

XXV

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE
(John XIII. 33–38; XIV. 1–11)

John, in his account of the Last Supper, records a conversation of some length which occurred at that time, either after the Supper, or during its progress. It is important to bear in mind that the division into chapters is purely arbitrary, being made without relation to the logical analysis of the discourse. So in our study it is well, as far as possible, to disregard the division into chapters, because in nearly every instance these divisions confuse the sense, and break the continuity of the conversation.

The conversation begins at once upon the departure of Judas and follows along more or less continuously until the great prayer of the seventeenth chapter. Jesus had several times before this told his disciples what must happen at the conclusion of his work. That is, he had predicted his own crucifixion and the apparent disaster to his mission. And so now he begins immediately upon this same theme, which is the subject of his discourse throughout this conversation. For what he says at this time is very largely intended by him to be an explanation that shall satisfy the reason and

understanding of his disciples, so that they will not be so much surprised at his death and the incidents following it. He wishes them to understand him fully, not only in his position at that time, but in the position which he must take in the critical events so soon to occur. He begins very simply:

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you."

Although Jesus does not directly say that he is going away, yet his words imply that, and that he is going where they cannot at that time follow him. And Peter immediately curious inquires:

"Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

We recognize at once that Jesus in speaking about going away, uses that term instead of the direct announcement of his crucifixion and death, but his disciples did not at all understand it so. He has told Peter that he cannot follow him now, but that he shall follow him afterwards. So their curiosity is aroused, and Peter says unto him:

"Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake."

In the enthusiasm of the moment Peter is ready to go with Jesus even unto his own death, thinking, probably, only of the dangers of a possible journey to some other country. Jesus had been, we know, for some little time previous to this in Judea outside the dominion of Herod. He had also been away from the scribes and Pharisees; away from the dangers of assassination, or arrest by the authorities. Therefore it was but natural that Peter should think as he did, and that he should make his statement in this impassioned way. I think we all like Peter, because he was so eager and outspoken, and it seems rather a part of our human nature to admire him even for his very defects. So Peter says, "I will lay down my life for thy sake," and Jesus answers him:

"Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow,[1] till thou hast denied me thrice."

[1] That is, "the watch trumpet shall not sound." "It is well known that no cocks were allowed to remain in Jerusalem during the passover feast. The Romans, who had a strong guard in the castle of Antonia, which overlooked the temple, divided the night into four watches, beginning at six, nine, twelve, and three o'clock. Mark xiii. 35 alludes to this division of time. The two last watches were both called cock-crowings. The Romans relieved guard at each watch by sound of trumpet; the trumpet of the third watch was called the first, and that of the fourth the second cock. And when it was said the cock crew, the meaning is, that the trumpet of the third watch sounded, which always happened at midnight."—Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott.*

So far as the narrative is concerned, this part ends here; and Jesus, according to this record, begins at once to tell where he is going, and why. He also speaks to them in the course of this conversation, many words of comfort and of preparation for their work when he shall no longer be with them. He says:

"Let not your heart be troubled: (ye) believe in God, believe also in me."

"Ye" is omitted in the Revised Version, Margin. "Let not your heart be troubled at my going away; believe in God and believe in me also." Jesus knows that if they do thus really believe, they will not be disturbed by his departure. These are words of comfort that every one who mourns or who is in trouble may apply unto himself. *"Let not your heart be troubled."* And this is his counsel to his disciples whenever they are in any difficulty, or whenever they are in any way disturbed, as when they saw him coming to them over the water, and he said, "Fear not."

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

He was going, not to a foreign country, but out of this material world unto the spiritual world of God. He was going into the Father's house, into the resi-

dence of truth. And that place is one which has "many mansions," or as is rendered by other translators, "many abiding-places," or "dwellings." "In my Father's house where I go, there are many abiding-places"; therefore an abiding-place for each one of God's children. And realize what this means,—not a temporary place,—but a place *to stay*. And there will be welcome for you there, because he goes to make ready for your coming. So why should one be troubled? Why should one doubt or question? Simply, *Believe in God, believe also in the Christ.*" But Jesus does not leave it there, he makes it far more wonderful, far more complete, by uttering these most comforting words:

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

So this departure is not to be final. He goes but to return again. And not only was he to return to them, but he was to abide with them always in the spirit, as he himself said in the very last words that he is supposed to have spoken to his disciples, as recorded by Matthew, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Or, as translated in the Margin of the Revised Version as well as in other places, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the

consummation of the age." Or again, "I am with you all the days, till the full end of the age,"[1] and that is practically saying, "throughout eternity." And so does the Christ abide with us, with each and every one, *forever.*

"I will come again and receive you unto myself." The Greek word for "receive" as used here has a distinct meaning, one that is fuller and more wonderful than the meaning we ordinarily attach to the word. In one sense the word means to "take along"; in another, "to take to one's side." So this might read, "I am coming again and will take you along with me; I will take you with me, by my side." The beauty and the tenderness, the comfort of this thought are truly marvelous. Why, there is not a place in all the words of Jesus which indicates anything else than that he himself is a child of God, and that each one of us is also a child of God, and thus entitled to all that he is entitled to; side by side, *together,* as brother and brother.

"That where I am, ye may be also." Jesus recognized the spirit and he dwelt in the spirit; or if you prefer, he dwelt in the spiritual life. With him the material life was almost entirely subordinated, at least with him it was secondary in every particular, and that is why he could do the works that he did. And there

[1] Young's *Marginal Readings.*

in the spirit, or in that spiritual life, we may be also, alongside of him, walking with him. And as we walk with him he will show us more and more of the truth as we are able to receive it. Every one who has recognized the coming of the Christ in his own consciousness realizes the truth of these statements. Looking at it from this point of view, we almost wonder that Jesus should say by way of introduction when telling his disciples where he was going,—"Let not your hearts be troubled," when he might rather have said, "Rejoice that I go."

"And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

In the Revised Version this reads, "And whither I go, ye know the way." I imagine that the disciples missed the glorious truth expressed in these words; that they, at least most of them, did not understand what Jesus really meant, so imbued were they with the idea that he was going to another country where the Jews would not trouble him. Even we ourselves in these days find it difficult to grasp the full meaning of Jesus' utterances, but as we enlarge our spiritual vision, so shall we advance in the understanding of the great truths of existence which he taught. We now hear from Thomas, who, it is evident, did not understand the meaning of Jesus' words, for he says unto him:

"Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

It would seem from this question that Thomas thought that Jesus was actually going to make a journey, perhaps to some distant country. Then Jesus answers his question with those wonderful words so well-known to every one:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

"I am the way." This is as though he were saying, "It is not far off, it is not a question of distance. It is with me and is the way of the spiritual life and not the material. It is the way of truth." This passage is similar in thought to those other words which we remember in the parable of the Good Shepherd, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved"; and, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

He had said he was going to the Father, and so now he says, "No one cometh unto the Father, but by or through me" (R. V.). In all these instances he does not speak as the man Jesus, but as the Christ, the spiritual being. You see he is not referring to that life which is perceived only through the senses, but to the inward life, the life of the spirit. It is by this

spiritual life only that men "go" to the Father. It is by the way of the truth only that men learn to know God; that they become acquainted with Him. And it was by this way that Jesus went to the Father. We say "went," but it is wholly metaphor; there is no "going" in the sense of actual motion. He shows that here when he says, "I am the way." It is only by that way, the spiritual way, that men approach and draw near to God. Men have tried multitudes of ways, and many, as the parable says, have tried to reach the fold by climbing up "some other way" instead of entering in by the door. They have tried some other method than the right one, some other life than the spiritual one. The way of Jesus is the way of truth and it is only by living that truth, *being* that truth, that men come into the presence of God. So Jesus continues:

"If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him."

Or, we might say, "If you had really known and understood me, you would have known my Father also; but after this you will know Him, and you have already seen Him," meaning of course through the spiritual vision. Perhaps we may interpret the last clause thus, "You are already acquainted with Him through my teachings." Jesus naturally did not mean

that they had seen God in any way other than the spiritual way.

What do we see when we look at our fellow beings? We do not really see the man himself but only his outer form, the material body, so-called. The person *himself* we do not see, and never can with these material eyes. When we look at our friends, at our chance acquaintances, at the people on the street, at even the thief or the murderer, do we see them as they really are? Certainly not! We see only the *exterior* of each individual. That which is really *he* is hidden from our physical sight. Our eyes are holden even as Thomas' were, even as were the eyes of the disciples during all those years which they spent with Jesus. Whatever we may truly know of the person at whom we look is through the inner vision. The divine, the spiritual being, the "I am," that exists in every child of God is seen or recognized only through the inner or spiritual perception. And that is the only way that we shall ever *see* God. Philip now joining the conversation says unto Jesus:

"Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

"Show to us the Father, and it is enough for us," is a little closer rendering of the Greek. And so it is with us all, if we did but realize it. We are all hunting for the Father. We are searching for God each

in his own way, looking here, there and everywhere, up in the blue sky, through the meadows, among the green grass and the flowers, everywhere hunting for God, searching always for the Infinite Being. Whether we realize it or not, it is the one great quest and need of humanity. Jesus in response to Philip's statement says:

"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?"

"Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me?" Gentleness itself, and yet somewhat of a rebuke! During all this time had not some glimpse of the real nature of Jesus and of the truths which he had taught penetrated Philip's consciousness? If his spiritual perception had been truly awakened, Philip could not have spoken as he did. Jesus then makes a similar statement to the one he had just made in his answer to Thomas when he said, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also," for he now says to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And then he continues, with this profound question:

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?"

As he had said only a short time before, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me." And again, "He that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me." That is the language of Jesus from the very first. He always declared his unity or oneness with the Father. And when we turn to the scientific explanation of this, as we considered in the first chapter of this Book of John, we find that every human being is the child of God, not only Jesus the Christ, but every one. So each may realize this unity or oneness for himself. If we could only appreciate fully the truth of these statements when we utter them, letting that truth enter into our consciousness, if we might only stop long enough in our headlong haste, to get just a glimpse of its deepest meaning, we should be vastly different creatures from what we now are.

"The words that I speak unto you I speak not of (from—R. V.) myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works."

Jesus had said a similar thing before, "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." It was God's word that he was speaking. And here in this very fact is the proof of what he had just said, that he is in the Father and the

Father is in him. It was the same with the wonderful works which he had done and which we call his "miracles," for, as he says here, "*The Father abiding in me doeth His works*" (R. V.). And remember that other marvelous statement, "The Son can do nothing of himself; but the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that Himself doeth." Read again that fifth chapter of John! What a revelation is there regarding the relation of the Father and the Son! So we see that Jesus has proved by his life, by what he has done, that he is in the Father and the Father in him. And the Father worketh through him to do His,—the Father's,—work. What did he say about the man born blind? "That the works of God should be made manifest, I must work the works of Him that sent me." Paul also had a glimpse of this when he said, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." It was in the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, (notice, your *good* works), and glorify," —here is the key of the situation,—"and glorify," *not you yourself,* but "your Father which is in heaven." *The Father doeth the work.*

"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

Or, according to another manuscript reading, "Believe me, because I am in the Father, and the Father in me; but if not, on account of His works believe me." And so we come back again to almost the first thing that Jesus said on this occasion, "Believe in God, believe also in me." Believe in God, believe also in the Christ, and believe in the Christ within yourself. Believe in the Infinite Spirit, and believe in that spirit which was in Jesus. That spirit is in you also and it is the essential of yourself. Without it you are nothing, and without it there would be nothing. But *God is,* and *God is All,* and being divine, all His manifestations are also divine. That divine spirit was revealed in Jesus far more completely than in any other, but it is there in each one of us, ready to be revealed or expressed in its perfection, if we will but recognize it.

XXVI

THE ABIDING PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(John XIV. 12–26)

In the conversation we are now considering, Jesus is preparing his disciples for his departure. Hitherto they had relied on him; his desire is to show them how to rely upon themselves when he shall be gone. As the conversation progresses Jesus tells them something of the relation existing between himself and the Father, referring again to the oneness of the two. And he asks them to, "Believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe for the very works' sake." Next he tells them what will be the result of thus believing; something that has been much overlooked until the present day:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the[1] Father.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

"If ye shall ask (me)[2] anything in my name, I will do it."

[1] In the Revised Version "the" is used instead of "my," and it seems more in harmony with the teaching of Jesus.

[2] In the King James Version "me" is omitted, but is found in the Revised Version and in other translations.

These are remarkable words, and they stand here as a promise to all mankind. They are uttered as simply as are all Jesus' declarations. They present the straight facts without limitations and without conditions, except the very important one of belief or faith. There is no question of any formality, no condition except the one, that ye believe in the Christ, or in the spiritual truths which he taught. *Then,* "The works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do." Simplicity itself and positiveness itself! Just the mere statement of a fact, without any expression of uncertainty or doubt, and without any expressions whatsoever as to *how* the work may be done. This is one of the prominent places where Jesus shows that he does not claim for himself one thing which he does not recognize as belonging to every other child of God without exception.

Great stress has always been laid by the churches upon "belief," and here Jesus lays the principal stress upon that word "believe." And he is absolutely correct, both philosophically and scientifically correct. It *is* a question of belief, and that alone. And it is for each individual to search himself and to find out whether or not he does really believe. No one else can tell, none but he alone. With belief or faith all things shall be accomplished; not only the works that Jesus did, but "greater works than these," as he himself

said. And notice, it is *real* belief that determines the conduct, and not what people *say* they believe. There may indeed be a very wide difference between a person's actual belief and what he imagines he believes, but the results are always in accordance with the belief itself. We believe a man is an enemy, and we act in accordance with that belief, regardless of what our words may be. And it is the same with regard to the man whom we believe to be our friend; we act accordingly, regardless of what we may say about it.

There was one time when Jesus tested his disciples by saying to them, "Whom say the people that I am?" And then he put the question directly to them, "But whom say *ye* that I am?" And Peter answered straight to the point, and apparently under the influence of strong inspiration, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And for that moment Peter believed it. But later, when doubt came into his heart and he believed in the power of the Jews more than he believed in the Christ, he denied Jesus. Peter did not quite know himself. And so, just in accordance with our belief do we act; and likewise, just in accordance with that belief, is it unto us, as Solomon said centuries before, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."[1] Not, "so the conditions," not, "so the circumstances," but "so is *he*," the man. As Jesus

[1] Proverbs xxiii. 7.

said in his great rule for prayer, "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, *believe* that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." And it is just like that always. As we read this statement here the question is brought directly home to every one of us. *Do we believe these words of Jesus?* It is evident that the large majority of people do not, and therefore when they ask, they do not ask with entire faith.

Then Jesus says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." The first step in our asking is to *believe* in the Christ and his teachings, the next is to ask "*in his name.*" We are to believe his teachings, otherwise we cannot ask in his name. This phrase "in his name" means that we are to ask in the spirit of Jesus, or according to his method. We are to ask as he asked when he asked of God. This means that when we pray we are to forget the outer self and the outer world, that is, the physical self and the material world. We are to pray or ask from that inner spiritual being which is the real or true self and without which we could not be, indeed could not even present this appearance in the physical world.

To the people of those times, the phrase "in his name," meant far more than it does to us. We know how in business a man may have an agent, who does things in his name, and who does them as nearly as possible as his employer would do them. In that sense

we may think of the term as a mere legal form, but even so it may assist us to understand the deeper meaning really contained in these three words as used here. To the people of biblical times, the word "name" was vastly more than a mere designation as we use the word to-day; to them in those days it meant the man himself; the individual in his own personality; that which made him what he was. In reading the Book of Genesis, we find certain reasons for names bestowed on individuals and those reasons reveal some quality in the person, some peculiarity to do with that particular individual.

And so in those old Bible days their names were more than mere designations. People went beyond and deeper than the mere surface, searching into the essential characteristics of the person, when bestowing a name. Thus a close relationship existed between a man and his name. And sometimes names were changed to suit the changing traits of an individual as happened in the case of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel; likewise, the name of Paul, the apostle, was originally Saul.

We are, then, to ask in the name of the Christ; we are to ask as he asked, remembering what he was, the works that he did, the truths that he uttered, the words that he spoke. We are to believe in him as he really was, not so much as the man Jesus, but as the

Christ, the spiritual being which he manifested to the world.

We marvel, as well we may, at the story of Jesus' works, and at his life, for that is a part of his works; we also wonder at his words, just in proportion to our failure to understand them. Some of his works are so incomprehensible that we call them "miracles"; some of them are so wonderful that quite frequently the records are not accepted, even by so-called believers, except with grave questioning and serious doubts. In fact many faithful followers hesitate at some of Jesus' precepts, saying they are impossible of complete observance, as when he said, "Love your enemies." This means that they do not believe in that precept at least, whatever else they may believe. And so we might go on with other instances.

Thus it is only too evident that we do not do the works that Jesus did. Yet he said, "*The works that I do shall ye do also.*" But even though we may stand in awe of all these things, even though they may seem to overpower us and we shrink back into our own self-condemnation, into our feelings of insignificance and unworthiness, and say that such works are impossible for us, yet the great rule already referred to, which Jesus gave us for prayer, is simple and plain enough: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, *believe* that ye have received them, and *ye shall have*

them." These words are said to every individual; they are without qualification or limitation and it is intended for every child of God to follow them, just as that prayer which we repeat so often, beginning " Our Father," is meant for every child of God. These instructions are for each one of us. It is intended that we should do the works that Jesus did, should live the life that he lived.

Take that great ethical precept which we call the Golden Rule: " All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." This precept is not limited to the learned, to the wise, nor the good; indeed, it is not limited in any direction, but is intended for the observance of every one. And in this rule is embodied a perfect standard for right-living and right-doing. The fact is that if we *really* believed in the efficacy of this one precept, we would live up to its teaching, and earth would be a heaven. And in following this one precept, we should put ourselves in the place where we should do greater works even than Jesus did when he was here, as he himself affirmed when he said, "And greater works than these shall ye do." We puzzle ourselves as to what he meant by " greater works," in our thought limiting them to the miracles of healing which he did. But I believe that Jesus' meaning was more inclusive even than that, was indeed far more wonderful than that, and was intended

to include every phase of life, and especially the recognition and understanding of even greater truths.

"Because I go unto the Father." Why were his disciples to do greater works because he went to the Father? There may be some unexplained reason for this statement which we are not aware of, but there is one thought in connection with it which may give some aid to its interpretation. His going to the Father at least meant the laying aside of materiality, the putting away or discarding of the human element. We know that human nature is inclined to worship personality, that it feels the necessity of something tangible in its relations with life. Jesus in going to the Father freed himself entirely of the personal or human self. As he said in the parable of the Good Shepherd, he could lay down his life and could take it up again. And he did lay it down, and in laying it down, he deprived his disciples of the opportunity of worshipping that side of him, of clinging to the merely personal. We have in Jesus' teachings a mass of declarations with a startling individuality running through the whole of them, that is beyond the individuality of any merely human writer. It is beyond the genius of ordinary humanity to produce so varied a number of precepts, at once striking, original, and consistent, as Jesus has given us. But the man himself is gone, and gone utterly from our material vision, so that we have no alternative but

to worship the spirit; and it is the spirit we are to worship and naught else.

"If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." [1]

Throughout the world there are vast numbers of people who say they love him, and yet say they cannot keep his commandments, that indeed it is impossible to live up to them. Yet Jesus never asks us to do the impossible.

First he tells us that if we believe in him we shall do the works that he did, even greater works. Then he says that whatsoever we may ask in his name, that will he do. Now he says that if we love him we shall keep his precepts, not because they are commandments, but *because we love him.* This is clearly set forth in the Sermon on the Mount when he says that our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of those who do the right on account of the law only. We are to do the right because we love him, and loving him includes loving the truth that he taught. We are to do the right because it is right, and because we love to do it, and in doing those things we love to do, there is no law. Law disappears.

[1] Revised Version. This is the correct rendering. In the Greek it is not a command, "*Keep* my commandments," but a statement, "*Ye will,*" etc. Compare with verses 21 and 23, and John xv. 10.

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."

There is an interesting connotation to this word "pray," or rather to the Greek word of which this is a translation. "Ask" is considered by some to be nearer the Greek than "pray"; and in the Margin of the Revised Version we find it translated, "I will make request of the Father." At any rate, the word as used here does not mean "beseech" in the sense of a subordinate begging of a superior, but more as if an equal were addressing an equal, and this is in harmony with Jesus' words: "I and the Father are one."

Jesus told us to pray without a doubt in our hearts. He said,—and I cannot repeat the words too often,—"All things whatsoever that ye pray and ask for, *believe ye have received* them and *ye shall have them.*" And so here he says with as great faith, "I will pray the Father, and *He will give you* another Comforter." There is not the slightest sign of any expression of doubt in these statements, any more than when he said, "Ask, and it shall be given you." He is going away; he is separating himself from his disciples. He has told them not to be troubled. Jesus recognizes the human side of this separation, as occurs with us when a friend leaves us. And now he says to encourage them, that the Father will give them *another*

Comforter. He has been their Comforter during the past three years, and now that he is leaving them, he tells them that the Father will give them another Helper. And this Helper is to abide with them forever, is, indeed, to abide with *us* forever. And in our asking, if we "believe that we *have* received," we thus become conscious of the presence of this Helper. Many recognize it as the "inner voice."

We can well understand how dependent the disciples were upon Jesus and what a Comforter he must have been to them, just as we in our imaginings may recognize what a blessing it would be to us if he were only here now in the flesh. We think what a delight his presence would be to us and how much better we could be under such a close influence. Yet he says here, "The Father shall give you *another* Comforter."

The word "Comforter" according to its derivation means some one "called alongside for help"; it is also translated "Helper" in the Margin of the Revised Version and in other places. We are to remember that no man taught freedom as Jesus taught it; no man left his followers free as he left them free. When he had told the people the most vital of truths, and they not understanding him, had gone away and left him, Jesus then turned to the twelve disciples and said, "Will ye also go away?" That to me is one of the intensely pathetic incidents in his career. He exer-

cised no authority over them in that crisis, for it was a crisis; he left them free, as he always did, to do the things they pleased without interference from him. And so here he promises them another Helper, but not one who thrusts his help upon them. Ah, no! The Comforter referred to by Jesus is one to be "*called* alongside for help" when wanted or needed; one standing there always, never intruding, never dominating, never controlling, but ready when called upon, with abundance of power and infinite ability,—ready to help.

"Another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;
"Even the Spirit of truth."

"*Even the Spirit of truth,*"—thus Jesus defines the one called alongside for help. And in verse twenty-six of the next chapter we find the same expression used, "But when the Comforter is come, even the Spirit of truth." Also a little farther on he says, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." And then again in verse twenty-six of this chapter we are now considering he says, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." The better rendering of the Greek is "*Holy Spirit*" and it is so translated in the Revised

Version. So we have here these expressions meaning the same thing,—Comforter, Spirit of truth, Holy Spirit (or Holy Ghost). We look upon them frequently as entirely distinct, but they are really one in their meaning. In the story of the baptism you remember how John the Baptist saw "the Spirit of God descending upon Jesus." This is according to Matthew's report. Mark simply says, as does John in this Gospel, that he saw "the Spirit descending upon him." Luke's version is that "the Holy Ghost (Spirit) descended upon him." All use the *same* word,—*Spirit*.

We know how on several different occasions Jesus told his disciples that they would be in trouble, that their lives would be in danger, and they would have to defend themselves, that is, they would have to make explanations why they did thus and so. And on one such occasion as Matthew reports it, after telling them not to give thought as to what they shall say, for in that same hour it shall be given them what they shall speak, Jesus concludes his advice to them by saying, "For it is not ye (meaning the material personality) that speak, but the *Spirit of your Father* which speaketh in you."[1] And Luke states that Jesus on a similar occasion tells them not to be anxious as to what they shall say, for in that very hour "the *Holy Spirit* shall

[1] Matt. x. 20.

teach you what ye ought to say." Thus we see that the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, or the Holy Spirit, are all different names for the Spirit of God. To continue:

"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

Another rendering of the Greek might read: "Even the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive, or is not able to receive, because it sees it not, that is, does not recognize it; but you know it, because it abides with you and *is in you.*" By "the world" is meant the world of materiality or the physical world. We, as human beings, do not *see* life anywhere; we see only its physical manifestations. It is impossible that the eyes of flesh should see that which is of the spirit. So the physiologist searching for life in materiality and finding it not, frequently comes to the conclusion that this physical manifestation is all there is, and consequently that there is no existence hereafter. But those who have been in that retired place of themselves, which is the inner spiritual self, have perceived the truth and have communed with the Holy Spirit. Those do not need the testimony of natural science, nor any aid beyond their own spiritual perception, for they

know that there in that secret place they were face to face with God.

Thus this world of materiality does not see or know that Spirit of truth which is the Spirit of God.[1] Yet this Spirit of truth is in close relation to that inner spiritual self which is the reality of each individual,—the spiritual being. If we go back to that great philosophy of life and existence, the doctrine of the Logos, as set forth in the first chapter of this Book of John, we see how absolutely true these words are: "The Light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." And yet every man being free, some seek alone and in the darkness, and find not that light which would be a lamp unto their feet and a guide beyond all the wisdom of the earth. Yet it is there, shining in the darkness, and waiting to be revealed, because it is that "true Light which lighteth *every man that cometh into the world.*"

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

"Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me."

After his death the world would see him no more, but they, his disciples, would see him. And they did

[1] See 1 Cor. ii. 14, and context.

see him for a brief time, forty days as the record says, and to that fact the world has clung for over nineteen hundred years. And principally because of that one great fact of the resurrection the words of Jesus have been preserved, until now the dawn is appearing and we are beginning to understand; are beginning to let the light shine in our hearts, to let the truth speak in ourselves.

" Because I live, ye shall live also."

Because I am able to manifest to you the true life, which is the spiritual life, so shall you be able to do also. And because I am able to enter in to the eternal life, so shall you also be able to overcome this earth life and to enter in to that eternal life. Because Jesus showed the world at that time and has been showing it ever since, that life lives and does not die; because we have seen and known that he lived after so-called " death," *therefore* have we come to believe in immortality, in the eternal life of the spirit.

" At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

" At that day," that is, when you come into the recognition of the eternal life, into the recognition of the power of life over death, then shall you understand the perfect oneness of the Father with His children;

then "shall you know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

And remember we are to exclude in our understanding of the word "commandments," all idea of authority, domination, or control in connection with its meaning. Although we may obey his commandments to the letter as far as all outward appearances go, yet we do not really keep them unless we do so because we want to; because we choose or desire to keep them. If we keep the commandments under compulsion just because it is right to obey them, we are keeping them in the letter only. The position which Jesus takes here is far beyond all thought of compulsion, as he taught always the principle of absolute freedom. The idea is,—he that has accepted his commandments or his precepts with an understanding heart, and is endeavoring to live in accordance with them, he it is who really loves Jesus. It is just as he had said a few moments before, "*If you love me,* you *will* keep my commandments."

"And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

Words that are remarkable for their beauty, and for the intense meaning which they must convey to whoever reads them understandingly.

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: (notice he does not use the term "commandments" here) and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

This is but a repetition of thoughts already expressed, though in a slightly different form, and with an added intensity, a deeper meaning, for Jesus now says, "*We* will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

"He that loveth me not keepeth not my words; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me" (R. V.).

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

"But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (R. V.).

XXVII

THE TRUE VINE
(John XIV. 27–31; XV. 1–8)

In the East, in the time of Jesus, and in fact, even at the present time, the expression used between friends at parting is, "Peace be with you." And so Jesus says to the disciples with him at the Supper at the time of his farewell talk with them:

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

And then he continues:

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (fearful—R. V.).
"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I."

When we take into consideration the circumstances of this farewell, it is nothing short of wonderful. Jesus stood in the shadow of the cross. He knew that in a few hours at the most, his arrest would take place, to be followed by all the tragic after-events; and yet

notwithstanding all this, he uttered these comforting words to his disciples, "My peace I give unto you." That he could talk to them of his own peace at such a time would seem the more remarkable to us if we did not understand the great faith underlying his every word, and even his entire course of action at all times. We know that the average man under such circumstances would be preparing for flight. And Jesus might easily have gone away, might have escaped to a place of safety, as he had done on two or three other occasions when danger was threatening. But matters were now in such a condition that to flee would be a disgrace, and not only that, but such a course at this time would be a decided hindrance to the acceptance of his teachings. It would be to shirk the issue, for the crisis of his entire life was now imminent. Any avoidance of that would make impossible the resurrection and its great and marvelous lesson. It is evident that he had been conscious of this for some time. Only a short time before, he had said, "I can lay down my life, and I can take it up again," and I have no doubt he could have done so even then, as he did at the last when all appearances of materiality vanished as he ascended into heaven. Thus we know he might have evaded all that lay ahead of him; but in doing so he would also have fallen short of the grand culmination of his career. He would have failed to achieve that

which is known as the demonstration of the future life and which was a practical proof of immortality.

Here in this farewell talk with his disciples he seems to be trying to give them some understanding of that which was so soon to come to pass. He seems to have been raised far above them. I think that Jesus recognized at this time that as a result of his teachings there should come ultimately, a peace that the world did not then dream of, and indeed hardly realizes even now. He gave of this peace, not only to his disciples, but to the whole world because it is for every one.

And not so much *his* peace was he leaving with them, as the knowledge how to attain to that peace, which is in fact already ours by divine birthright, because it is of the peace of God, and so is for all mankind. It is as free as the air we breathe, absolutely free, and is entirely within the grasp of every individual. As Jesus said at the beginning,—the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, is within you. This kingdom is indeed within each one but each person must look within himself if he is to find it. And in so doing, guided by the truth, there shall come the recognition of heaven, and that perfect peace to which Jesus attained.

So why should their hearts be troubled? Why should they be afraid? And why also should our hearts be troubled? It is only our recognition of the

temporal things,—those things that pass away as the mists of the morning disappear from the mountain tops,—that causes us to be disturbed. It is our thoughts of separation, of our own loss, of what we miss, that trouble us.

Once more Jesus says to them, "I go away, and come again unto you." Then he tells them that they should rather be glad that he is going away, for he says, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father." Rejoice at the separation, at the seeming loss to them? No, not at that, not at their loss, their own sense of separation, but rejoice as we should rejoice when a friend leaves us for better surroundings, better conditions; for higher and greater things. And if we truly loved our friends we *should* rejoice when they go to a higher and better life, because of the greater good, the greater happiness coming to them. As Jesus said to his disciples here, "The Father is greater than I." And he was going to that Father, was going to a better life in every way; thus it was an occasion for their rejoicing. And in this rejoicing is found both peace and comfort. And so will it be with us when our friends depart from us, unless we are too much immersed in our own selfish thoughts of ourselves, and of what *we* want, of what *we* shall miss, and of what *we* shall lose. We all weep at the death or the "going away" of loved ones, and

we say it is because "we loved them so." That is our excuse. But Jesus meant that if they *really* loved him there would be no weeping, but instead would be rejoicing because he was going unto the Father, and to perfect peace and happiness.

"And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might (may—R. V.) believe.

"Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince (or ruler) of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

The prince of this world was already on his way, was already laying his plans by which he hoped to overcome the wonderful teachings of Jesus, hoped to put down and out forever this man and the strange things that he taught. He was, however, walking in the darkness and stumbling as men do stumble when they try to walk in darkness. But this prince of evil has nothing in common with this man of truth, who lived the life of truth and whose teachings shall endure forever. And out of the truth which he taught springs that which shall ultimately overwhelm and destroy all darkness, and all evil.

"But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."

Although this passage is found in the manuscripts at this place, I am inclined to the opinion that these were the last words of Jesus at the Supper. They are peculiarly appropriate as the last words on that occasion, and yet it may be that there was some conversation after this, not recorded here, which suggests and introduces the following parable. We can imagine them reclining around the table after the Supper, and conversing for a considerable time, wandering from one subject to another and yet continually returning to the one thought, that of his going away. Then Jesus begins:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."

In the fifth verse he says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Thus Jesus in these words of his includes every one. In this metaphor there is but one vine, of which we are the branches; the Father, and himself the Christ, and "ye" yourselves; or, the husbandman, the vine, and the branches, those branches that are the offshoots of the vine and which have sprung from the main body of the vine, including the little soft tendrils which have not yet come to maturity. The husbandman is the one who plants the vine. He is the creator so to speak, and it is because of him and his action or rather it is through him, that

the vine with its branches lives and grows and has its being. Literally, a husbandman is he who puts the seed into the ground, having prepared the ground beforehand, and who watches the springing up of the plant and cares for it as it develops. When necessary he drives stakes into the ground for its support or fastens it to a trellis, keeping it in order. This is the husbandman's part.

But beyond all this, if we wish to look a little deeper, there is the life in the seed. As John words it in his philosophy, "That which hath been made was life in Him"; so the life in the seed is of His life, is of the life of the husbandman. Thus the life of the vine is of God's life, just as the life of you is of God's life. And that life is the vital principle in *every* vine; it lives and grows in the vine, continuing out into the branches. It produced the vine and it made the branches grow.

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth [1] it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

Jesus had said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." So now he says, "Al-

[1] "Cleanseth," Rev. Ver. and "prunes," Young, or as in Young's *Marginal Readings,* "he doth cleanse by pruning it."

ready ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you, or because of the truth I have spoken unto you." And the truth is of God, and it lives and manifests in you, if you will but let it. And as the truth makes free, so truth also purifies. The fruit of impurity is imperfection always. Then he continues:

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

This is one of the numerous instances where Jesus so beautifully expresses that spiritual oneness which he realized as existing between himself and all God's children.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Jesus here is referring to the Christ of himself, to the spiritual being of himself. The rendering of the Revised Version is, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for apart from me ye can do nothing," or as interpreted by Young, "because severed from me you can do nothing." And that is literally correct because when apart from the Christ, we are severed from the truth, and can therefore accomplish nothing. Thus we see that to abide

in Jesus the Christ really means to abide in the truth. And we can never entirely separate ourselves from the truth, just because of the existence of that oneness underlying all spiritual life which Jesus endeavored to explain to us, and which binds together all God's creatures, though many are totally ignorant of it.

"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, (the branches)[1] and cast them into the fire, and they (the branches) are burned."

Or as I interpret this passage: If a man abide not in the truth,—meaning of course the material or earth man, he who is subject to sin, because the spiritual man must ever abide in the truth,—he, the sinful self, is cast forth like a branch that is withered. These branches are gathered and cast into the fire, and are burned. Notice, the whole vine is not subjected to the fire. The fire does not determine the good or bad. The branch is already separated from the vine. It is dead, therefore useless. It might as well be burned to be out of the way.

Thus the branch that is not of the truth, that is lacking in fruit, is cast away. How? Let us see. How is it with you when you recognize the unprofitable-

[1] In the Greek "them" is neuter gender, referring to "branches."

ness of the error you are pursuing? You bring judgment and condemnation yourself upon that error, you purge it from yourself, you cast it away. When the light of truth within you has shown you the true character of the evil, then you cherish it no longer, and facing the issue squarely, you cast it off and away from you. So this is what Jesus means when he says here, "men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

We have been taught from early life to fear this fire; it has been held up to us as a terror, as a thing to be greatly feared, as if it referred to "the fire of eternal punishment," so-called. But as I interpret this, it simply means that a man's sins or bad habits are to be cast from him like a branch that is withered. When we understand the eternal truth of God, when we understand His infinite love, we shall realize that in it there is no room for fear; instead, there is all that the heart of man could desire.

And all that is not in harmony with God's love, all that is not in harmony with His truth, you yourselves will eventually cast away when you recognize the truth, when you *know* that God is Love. For in the midst of all your desires and greater than them all, whatever they may be, is the desire for God's love, even though you may not be conscious that this is so. And so finally are we purged of all sin, cleansed from

all impurities, until that cleansing results in perfection. Jesus then utters one of his most wonderful of all statements, embodying a truth frequently expressed by him in various forms:

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

If we abide in the Christ, if the truth abides in us, we shall ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us. Truly he speaks as no man ever spoke before. We utter these words with our lips, not half realizing the depth of their meaning; and even if we do realize their fullest significance, it is but for a short time. We very soon turn our thoughts to something else, because we think we must attend to the affairs of this world; and we say we have not the time for both. So the words of Jesus *abide* not with us. After a little there comes another season of rejoicing, another brief recognition, and then another lapse, and so on. But to "abide" means to "*stay.*" "If ye *abide* in me, and my words *stay* in you, *then* you shall ask what you will, and *it shall be done for you.*" Again it is just as Jesus said,—"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." But, we are first to live in the truth and let the truth live through us, then, *ask for what we wish. It shall be given us.* We can readily see that

under such conditions there will be no asking for wrong or sinful things. We shall not even desire them.

We say much, we talk learnedly and wisely, yet we do not *do* the works Jesus told us to do. And we wonder why. Here is the reason why. Here, too, is the reason why Jesus could heal as he did. And here is the method by which he healed, and by which we may heal if we will, and healing every time without a thought of failure. Merely this, live the truth, abide in the truth, then ask for what you will and it shall be done for you. Therefore, we are to *do* the right, *speak* the right, *be* the right. That is all. Let wrong of every kind disappear; turn it away; let it alone; prune yourselves; cut off the branches that are unfruitful of truth; abide in the truth of the Christ. Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness, or *rightness,* and then all these things shall be added unto you. Enter into the retired place of thyself, locking the door against all intruding thoughts, and there face to face with God, pray to Him, to the Father, who seeing in that secret place, will give to thee in the clear light. And there shall be no failure anywhere. *"Ask whatsoever ye will,* and *it shall be done"* (R. V.).

Some say this stands here in the Bible as a promise. We may call it that if we wish, but it is no more a promise than if I were to tell you that, holding a stone

in your hand, if you should turn your hand over and let the stone drop, it would fall to the ground. There is no promise in that. It is merely a statement of an accepted fact, of a natural law. So with this statement of Jesus, it is far more than a promise, it is a statement of truth in harmony with the principles of science, of a law that knows no turning, no deviation from its God-given course.

There is also one other thing to remember in connection with this, and that is, his great rule for prayer: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, *believe* that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." We are to believe, to have faith. And he who abides in the truth, who is living the truth, *will* have faith, and will have it more and more. And so Jesus comes to this conclusion:

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

That is, by abiding in the truth, you *will* bear much fruit, and so will show that you are indeed his disciples. And thus is the Father glorified.

XXVIII

LOVE

(John XV. 9–27; XVI. 1–4)

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue (abide—R. V.) ye in my love.

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

We reach the zenith of Jesus' teaching here in these words, and it is appropriate that they should occur at this place which is so near the close of his ministry. Jesus spoke also at other times of love. It was at a very early point in his career that he said, "Love your enemies"; and when asked what the greatest commandment of the law was, he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment. And the

second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." [1] These words coupled with those under immediate discussion are his most important on the subject of love, and we may take them as the keynote of his whole teaching. Jesus said many things which lead up to this subject. There is his doctrine of forgiveness, but great as it is, it is subordinate to his remarkable teachings on the subject of love. We do however recognize that a lofty pinnacle was reached in his peculiar teachings regarding forgiveness, for he taught that complete forgiveness which puts away,—puts out of mind,—all discordant thinking concerning another, leaving only love in the heart for that other. So the things that Jesus said regarding forgiveness may be considered among his greatest utterances.

In order fully to understand this, we must reduce this term to its simplest meaning, for, although we have many definitions of forgiveness yet the mind may be vague as to what the word itself really means. It stands in its simplest form as meaning just "*letting go, putting away.*" In other words it means simply the putting away of the discordant thought, whatever that thought may be. And taken in its entirety, that is, in its fullest sense, it means nothing less than the discarding of *all* discordant thoughts.

We say, "Our Father which art in heaven, forgive

[1] Mark xii. 30, 31; Matt. xxii. 37–39.

us our debts as we forgive our debtors," meaning, "Forgive what we owe Thee,—put out of Thy mind our indebtedness to Thee,—*as* we have put out of our mind the indebtedness of others to us." In other words, *forgive us as we have forgiven.* And in the last analysis this means the putting out of every discordant thought whatever. So Jesus said to his disciples, "*Love your enemies,*" and if we have forgiven as we would be forgiven, we are then indeed ready to love even our enemies; for, if we have *truly* forgiven, we have put out the thought of the injury, whatever it may be, that we have harbored in our mind concerning them; we have put out of mind *all* discordant thoughts with regard to them, and this means all thoughts of hate, of anger, of dislike or repugnance, even all thoughts of aloofness. And because we have done this so completely there is left in our minds only the image of the true child of God, that child which is made in His image and likeness. It is thus that we come into the realization and recognition of the fact that each one is a child of God and therefore each is our brother. So also it is thus that we manifest that we are *really* His children.

Jesus constantly emphasizes the need of forgiveness. But although forgiveness is one of his greatest precepts, and bears a close relation to all his other precepts, and although he said that forgiveness or remission

of sins should be preached throughout the world, we see that it is but secondary to this greater precept of love. It is absolutely impossible to maintain in the mind at the same time two opposite, conflicting thoughts regarding another. Love and hate, love and dislike, love and the sense of having been injured by some one, cannot occupy the mind at the same time. When we are truly loving a person we cannot hate him, because there is then no room in our hearts for hate. The thoughts of hate or dislike present in the mind effectively prohibit love. Probably there has never yet been a person who, reading with thoughtfulness for the first time, Jesus' advice regarding the loving of enemies, has not felt that it was impossible to follow. And most probably, without giving further thought to it, that person has cast aside the idea as an utter impossibility. And, I grant you, it *is* an impossibility; we cannot love an enemy so long as we consider him an enemy, so long as we hold in mind the thought of enmity against him.

It seems to me that a condition of complete forgiveness is necessary to complete happiness. I doubt if we can truly love God and continue to have an apprehension that some one is our enemy. Indeed I believe that the love which we owe to God for having loved us, necessitates the clean, pure heart, necessitates complete forgiveness towards every one,—the kind

of forgiveness that is indicated in our Lord's Prayer when we say, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." So we are to exclude the discordant thought and just in proportion as we do exclude all such thoughts are we able to love our enemies. You remember that John in one of his epistles says, "How can we love God whom we have not seen if we love not our brother whom we have seen." Jesus placed love of God first, but he placed love of our brother next, and he said one was like unto the other. And with loving our brother will come the recognition of that unity of relationship which Jesus said existed between our fellow beings and ourselves.

Jesus says much of love in this last conversation of his; and you remember that after Judas went out to betray him, Jesus said to those who were left, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." It is, *"As I have loved you";* and, "As the Father hath loved me, *so* have I loved you." It is with a love like the Father's love that Jesus loves us, and it is with a love like this that he wishes us to love one another. In connection with this we may remember how he told us to call God *"Father,"* and how here on this last solemn occasion when he speaks more frequently of the Father than at any other time, he as often calls Him *"the"* Father as he does *"my"*

Father; thus recognizing that we also are God's children. And if, as Jesus says, we *are* God's children, then we are like unto Him, and thus are capable of manifesting that perfect love towards all His children that Jesus desired us to manifest. All this is not beyond our ability; we may of ourselves exercise those divine qualities which God bestowed on us when He gave us the great gift of eternal life.

You know how Jesus defined that love when he said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." And so here he says, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." If we love him of course we will keep his commandments; thus the seeming harshness, the dictation, the domination of that word "commandment" disappears, for it is not an order, it is not a command, as we understand the meaning of the word. The commandments or precepts of Jesus are his own peculiar teachings or statements of truth, which he has given us to live by. He never commands us but instead always leaves us free. And in the keeping of his commandments or precepts, as we see and understand them, we are simply following the truth, God's own truth, and it is thus that we best manifest our love for Jesus. And then as he said, not only will the Father love us, but the Father and the Christ will make their abode with us. Then indeed will we realize the

meaning of the words, "The kingdom of God is within you."

Jesus then says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." He had spoken to them of peace when he said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," and now, while standing here at the very culmination of his career, he speaks of joy, telling them that he is speaking these truths unto them that his own joy may abide with them, so that their joy may be complete; or, as in the Revised Version, "that my joy *may be in you*, and that your joy *may be fulfilled.*" And this will come to pass through the outpouring of that divine love about which he has just been telling them.

And again Jesus says, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." But see how the idea of a command has been softened by his presentation of the thought of joy, for he has just said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that your *joy* might be full." We do not obey a command with joy, unless we understand and so accept it, thus obeying because of our own joy and pleasure in doing so. When we do understand, our natural impulse will be to respond, and then not only joy is present with us, but the greatest peace as well.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man

lay down his life for his friends." When we truly love, in this human way of ours, we are willing to part with anything for the one we love. We are willing to do anything for that one. But Jesus goes beyond that, for his declaration includes the offering of life itself for one's friends, meaning of course, this present or earthly life, for that is the only life that can be "laid down." And so he continues:

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you (that is, if you obey whatsoever precepts I have given unto you).

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord (or master) doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

The servant is looked upon as the subordinate. To him is not submitted the reasons for things. A little more in accordance with the original Greek might read, "The slave has no conception of what his lord doeth." He is not called upon to understand; it is not a part of his work. But it *is* the part of a friend to understand, for he is the one who assists, the one who is a companion, a comrade. And so Jesus calls us "*friends.*" And he said that all things that he has learned of God, he has made known unto us. Also there comes to us through our understanding of the truth that perception by which we know something of

what the Father Himself doeth. In the fifth chapter of John we remember that Jesus said, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that Himself doeth."

It is in doing the things that Jesus taught that we proclaim our realization that we are God's children, and that we attain to the recognition and the understanding of even greater truths than those we now perceive, for there are yet undiscovered and unrealized truths waiting for our cognizance whenever we are ready for such knowledge. It is intended that we should understand these things, and that we should have the perception, the clear sight, that is necessary for all progress. But so long as we are blinded by unforgiveness, by hatred and all such discordant thoughts, just so long do we keep ourselves from the discernment of greater truths.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you."

The rendering of the Revised Version is somewhat nearer the Greek: "Ye did not choose me, but I chose

you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide." I chose you that you should go out from me and bring forth fruit. And by "fruit" he means the fruit of service, the fruit of love and of truth, of the shining of that light which is within you, and which you are always to let shine to the glory of God the Father. Bearing such fruit as this, the results of which shall be lasting, or shall remain and not perish, you shall ask of the Father whatsoever you will and He will give it to you. But remember, Jesus says, "ask in my name," meaning, we are to ask as he himself asked, with perfect faith.

"These things I command you, that ye love one another."

"These things I command you, that ye *may* love one another," is the rendering of the Revised Version. And this might be interpreted to read: "These things I give into your keeping, these principles I entrust with you, these things I commend to you, so that you may love one another."

We remember how Jesus told Nicodemus in that interview with him, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." We have recognized all the way along how he marks the distinction between spirit and flesh. Here in

speaking of love he is speaking of the spirit only. But now he turns to the other side. He does not make it all a "bed of roses." He tells them what to do and he explains to them the difficulties of their work, and the troubles that will come to them. And we find similar instructions given in the tenth chapter of Matthew when he sent out his disciples.

"If the world hate you, ye know (know ye—R. V. Margin) that it hated me before it hated you.

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his (its—R. V.) own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."

"If ye were of the world, the world would love its own," that is, if you were akin to the world of error and wrong, that world of materiality would love you, you would be popular with it, but because you are not of that world, but instead of the spiritual world and I have chosen you for the spiritual life, therefore the world hateth you. Error or evil does its utmost to destroy truth. That is the nature of evil. It knows its own, but it does not know the truth, does not understand the truth. Thus again, "That which is born

of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and so it is always, and always will be, until error and all wrong disappear.

"But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not Him that sent me."

And this because they know not God, who is the Absolute Truth, from whom the Christ sprang, and of whose substance the Christ is. They know not any more than darkness knows the light. So it is always the flesh to the flesh, loving and caring for the things of the flesh, and the spirit to the spirit, loving and caring for the things of the spirit. "For my name's sake" or as in the Greek, "on account of my name," that is, on account of the truth which I have taught. All these things will they do unto you because of their hatred of the truth and "because they know not Him that sent me." They know not God who sent the Christ, therefore they do these things. And of this Jesus had warned them repeatedly. But in his telling them about the destruction which should come to Jerusalem, and how they should be persecuted, and the things that should be done unto them, he said, not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's knowledge, and not a hair of their head should perish.

Truth is eternal; truth never comes to an end, but is immortal and everlasting. Thus no truth is or ever

can be lost; if it could be, then God Himself might be lost, for all truth is of Him. And the true being of every child of God is as immortal as truth itself. Then although "these things" may come to one, yet there is no real loss and can be none, as we would know if we but had the understanding, if we but recognized fully and completely this fact,—that only that can be lost which is perishable and not eternal. You know how Jesus said, "If ye loved me, ye would *rejoice,* because I said, I go unto the Father." He was not to be lost to them and it was his great desire that they should understand this.

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak (excuse—R. V.) for their sin."

If the truth had not been revealed, if their errors had not been brought to their notice, there would have been no recognition of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. They have been shown the error of their ways.

"If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

"If I had not done among them the works which no other one had done, they would not have had sin; but

now they have even seen them, and yet have hated both me and my Father," is the rendering given by Wilson for this passage. Jesus had spoken the truth to them. A man does not suffer in his conscience for the wrong thing he did when he did not know that it was wrong. One may follow a certain course for a period of time with no recognition of error in connection with it. He may even think his course to be the right one, even to the extent of thinking such a course to be his duty. He sees in it no sin whatever. Thus he may be saved for a time from self-condemnation but he cannot be saved from the consequences of the sin itself. The fruit of wrong is more wrong and this is always the case.

"But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause."

Another rendering reads: "Thus they verify that word which was written in their law, They hated me without cause." And it is always so. Truth never gives cause for hatred, and yet even in our own days men have been hated for doing good and have even been persecuted in like manner as was Jesus and his disciples, although there was no cause for the hatred, no cause for the persecution. Jesus himself recognized that this hatred was all without a cause, but he

also recognized that it originated through their ignorance, their lack of understanding.

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

"And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth which comes forth from the Father, he will testify of me. And you also will testify, because you are with me from the beginning," is another rendering of this passage. "But when the *Comforter* is come," and remember the true definition of that, as previously discussed,—"*the one called alongside for help.*" "Which *proceedeth* from the Father," or as given in the Margin of the Revised Version, "*goeth forth* from the Father." This is not to be taken in the meaning that we perhaps might attach to it, as when one man goes out from another on that other's mission; the Greek word as used here is much more intimate in its meaning. It means something more than "comes away from." It means "*comes out of.*" The Spirit of truth comes out of, proceeds from the Father; it originates with Him and is one with Him, and also it is inseparable from Him. It does not leave Him (any more than

the thought leaves the thinker when expressed by him to another); that would be an impossibility for God is infinite and therefore *all*. And so the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, is of God, and "shall testify of me."

"These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended."

The Greek word which is here translated "offended" means "to cause to stumble." In the Revised Version the passage reads: "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be made to stumble," that is, that ye should not stumble on the road you are walking, through failure to understand these things that I have told you.

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

Such is the blindness of error, such is the hate of sin; and such was the hatred of those who killed Jesus, that they thought they were doing God service. And in these days men kill each other in our various wars because they think that it is right under the circumstances so to kill. Two nations fight to destroy each other, *each* with the opinion that it is right in so doing. All this happens because of ignorance, because of not knowing the truth.

"And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

"But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them."

Jesus is trying to open their eyes, trying to show them what they must face. Yet around and about, enveloping the whole, even almost hiding the error from sight, is the great truth which he taught concerning forgiveness and love. If these have been fully expressed, through our recognition of the truth, then the result is great tranquillity and peace like unto the peace of Jesus; while through and above all will shine supreme joy and perfect love. Love that loves even enemies. Love that loves to such an extent that it does not recognize enmity, does not recognize evil, that passes even beyond the thought of evil,—that divine love with which Jesus loves, and with which God the Father loves us. If that enters into the heart, if that vivifies us, then all trials and difficulties are but minor matters. Indeed one of the great results of such love is the gradual overcoming of all trials, all difficulties.

XXIX

GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT
(John XVI. 5–15)

JESUS has told his disciples that he is going away, and has referred to the tribulations which shall befall them. He has told them that the Comforter, which is the Spirit of truth, will come to them after he is gone. They have not interrupted the conversation for some time, and now he says again to them:

"But now I go my way to Him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?
"But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart."

Jesus had said to them, "If ye loved me, ye would *rejoice,* because I go unto the Father." He recognized their failure to understand the deeper meaning in these words, and he recognized also their sorrow. So he attempts to comfort them, speaking more clearly and more specifically concerning the Comforter than he has done before.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

Why is it better for them that he should go away? Here are these men who had followed him through these three years, who had been his almost constant companions, who had listened to his words, had witnessed his wonderful works, who had continued with him when many had turned from him. It would seem almost necessary that he should continue to be present with them to guide them farther, and lead them to a deeper knowledge of the truth. But he says, "It is expedient that I go." That is, "My going away will be advantageous for you." He meant that in the end it would prove to be for their best good. And why?

The going away of Jesus so far as the man himself was concerned, that is, the going away of the personal man, was complete. Of the man Jesus, the visible person, there was nothing left. Even the personal life of the man, so far as we know it, is practically lost to us. There is nothing certain about the time of his birth. We may be fairly well satisfied regarding it, and yet we do not know the date beyond question. The same uncertainty continues until the day of his crucifixion. The *personal* incidents and events connected with the life of Jesus are gone; that is, they are gone beyond the domain of positiveness. We should be glad to celebrate the day of his birth, but instead, we celebrate a purely arbitrary day, a day

which has come down to us from an old Roman holiday. And the day of his rising, the day of the resurrection, which was perhaps an even greater event than the day of his birth, even that is lost to us. We can conjecture, and we do celebrate that day every year, but it is a movable festival, coming one date one year, and another date another year. So we see that the man, the human being, has gone away effectually. Therefore, we must turn to the spiritual, because what remains to us, in the words that we have, is of the spiritual man. These teachings have fixed the identity of Jesus, his individuality, his existence, beyond question. This body of precepts proves conclusively that such a man did live, and that he perceived God's truth. All this remains to us. But the other, the material being, is gone, has disappeared completely.

We know very well the tendency of the human mind to worship personality. And it was, I believe, as before stated, just this worship of the person, this dependence on his personal self which Jesus wished to prevent in the lives of his disciples. It was the *spiritual* life which he wished them to consider, and I think he felt that the time had come when they could the better do this if he took his personal self away. And so we are to consider, and we do consider, not so much the man Jesus, as the spiritual Christ, whose life is best expressed by his utterances, his teachings.

The whole Christian world is to-day learning of this teaching and has been so learning for nineteen hundred years and more.

So here is the great reason, as it seems to me, why it was better for the disciples that Jesus should go away; it was that the purely personal should be removed, for that attracts unduly. Jesus saw that in order to have the spiritual teaching, that teaching of the absolute truth which he had given them, come prominently into their hearts and direct their lives, it was necessary that he should leave them.

" For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Simply because in the attention to the personal the Comforter would not be called for. In other words if Jesus remained with them they might not realize their need of the Comforter or Helper. In the devotion to personality we turn from the contemplation of spiritual things to the consideration of material things, and so the Comforter would not be called on for help.

" But if I depart, I will send him unto you." And it is true that thousands, nay untold numbers, have recognized the presence of this Comforter, in their trials, in their questionings and doubts, as well as in their triumphs and in the positiveness of their recognition of the truth. And Jesus defines here as he had not before, what the Comforter should do, for he says:

"And when he is come, he will reprove (convince or convict)[1] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

"Reprove" is well used here in relation to sin, but how reprove the world "of righteousness and of judgment"? The word here translated "reprove" is a difficult one to render into English because of its somewhat broad meaning. It means to disprove, to show forth, to convict through questioning; it means to convince by examination. And the word that is translated "of," is sometimes translated "concerning." Thus a closer rendering of the Greek might read: "And having come, he will convict the world concerning sin, and concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment." So the Comforter will help to decide, will bring light upon, these questions of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Who has really and sincerely asked for light on any subject, and sought it with confidence, who has not found it? Somewhere and at some time, if one has sought sincerely and earnestly, he has found the solution of his problem, the answer to his question. To him has come the vision, if you please, of the truth with regard to that questioning. So with the Helper alongside comes the recognition of the truth. Some-

[1] "*Convince*" is one rendering, while the Revised Version reads, "Will *convict* the world in respect of sin."

times it comes by degrees, little by little, but sometimes all at once in a lightning flash the whole question is revealed and the answer of days or weeks or months, perhaps even of years, has been seen in an instant of time. And so the Comforter speaking through the light of truth eventually shows us the true conditions and the way of continual progress.

But how does the light of truth reach sin which lies in a domain entirely apart from truth? It reaches it just as light discovers darkness, and in the discovery the darkness falls away. We have all experienced this in our attempt to live the right life, in our attempt to do the right thing. As we have recognized clearly one error in our course, in our conduct, it is as though a veil were drawn away, and our understanding shines directly upon another which we may once have believed to be right or perhaps were doubtful about, but which now we see to be distinctly wrong. So the light of truth shines through our questioning, convincing our understanding, revealing the true character of the error.

In relation to the word "sin," as we have already explained, we should not restrict its meaning simply to those actions or conditions which we count as sinful. The word is a more comprehensive word than that for it includes within its meaning all error, from the blackest sin,—even the worst that can be conceived of,—to

the slightest error of thought or action. The word "sin" in its original meaning did not mean at all what we mean in our present-day use of the word; it meant merely a "failure to hit the mark." And is that not just what sin is after all in whatever form we may find it,—*a failure to hit the mark?*

A little understanding of this question will help us to be less severe in our judgment of our fellow man as well as of ourselves. We may and should condemn the wrong wherever we find it, but there should be no condemnation of our brother in his failure to take the right course. With charity in our hearts we may find many excuses for the one who has so failed. Perhaps he was seeking to do the best he could under the circumstances. It may be that his instruction was erroneous so that he could not see clearly the shining of the light of truth. He may have believed that to be truth which was not truth, that to be right which was not right, and so when he acted he failed to hit the mark, that was all. And we shall see that that is the way with all wrong, if we will but look at ourselves and others without animosity, without condemnation, and without the hate and intensity of feeling which attends condemnation. But the light of truth shining through the error will disclose it for what it really is, so that gradually we shall see and know its true character.

"And of righteousness, and of judgment." As our knowledge of the truth increases, so is developed our understanding of sin or wrong, and our judgment of the same. So also is developed the true spirit of righteousness, which means *rightfulness,* and in a larger sense, godliness, holiness. So the Comforter comes to lead us into a true understanding of the real character of good and evil, that we may cling to the one, as we shall when we are convinced of its character, and reject the other when we are once really convinced with regard to that.

The word "judgment" has been to many a word of terror. It has frightened untold numbers of human beings into right doing, or rather has frightened them away from wrong doing, but in the last analysis it signifies merely a distinguishing, a deciding. At least that is the meaning of the Greek word which is here translated "judgment." It is a question of deciding or choosing. And do you not see how very simple it is, after all? The recognition of the truth, through the light shining within ourselves, illuminates our understanding so that we may choose, and choose rightly. And when we choose, that is, when we recognize and know the wrong, and knowing it to be wrong reject it, then that is the true judgment. And so this Comforter is to be called to our assistance whenever there is a doubt, an uncertainty, as to the right

course for us to take, so that the judgment, the choice, may be more nearly accurate, and the condemnation of and the exclusion of all wrong more nearly complete.

"Of sin, because they believe not on me."

When the Comforter is come he will convince the world of its sin or mistake in that it believed not in the Christ, that it believed not in the truth. We believe not in the truth because of our own blindness, *because we do not understand;* we do not see and comprehend clearly, that is all. And so often we follow the wrong because we think that particular wrong is right. The Decalogue says, "Thou shalt not kill." Jesus says, "Love your enemies, and do good to them which hate you"; and also, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." In loving there is no thought of killing, for love makes alive, invigorates; love is unselfish. And yet, take the one instance of war between nations and witness the spectacle of two great nations deliberately setting out to kill as many human beings as they can, and thinking they are doing God's work. And *each* nation so involved thinks its own country is in the right and doing the right thing. We may not wish to call this sin, but surely it is a failure to hit the mark through a lack of understanding.

"Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more."

Because Jesus goes to the Father and they will no more see him in the flesh, the Comforter, or Spirit of truth, will come to them and will enlighten them regarding all things that pertain to the truth. Thus will they understand the true spirit of righteousness and of judgment. Not the spirit of self-righteousness as exemplified by the Pharisees, not the "I am better than thou" spirit, but righteousness in the meaning or sense of the word rightfulness. Jesus had been constantly teaching them regarding these things, and now the time had come when they were to be masters of themselves, and were to take up the work of instructing others as he had been instructing them.

"Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

A rendering which is somewhat closer to the Greek reads: "And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged." There must be a clear understanding, a clear vision of the character of sin and the character of truth, in order that our judgment may be accurate, so that we may, each one of us, reject from ourselves the error which we see within ourselves. Jesus in his words here meant that the Comforter will help us to exercise this correct judg-

ment on all necessary occasions. But the prince or ruler of the world of evil is already judged, even of itself is evil judged; evil does not need our judgment, because when let alone it vanishes into its own nothingness. We are to exercise judgment merely that we may distinguish between the right and the wrong, between the good and the evil, rejecting the evil and retaining the good.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

That is, you are not ready for them now, you cannot sustain or absorb them now. This is always so. We cannot accept all truth at once. But the recognition and acceptance of one truth puts us in the position to see more clearly and to accept the next truth, and so on to a broader and larger vision. They were not ready for more at that time, and yet he was leaving them. But he tells them of one who will be there in his stead. Not a person, but a vital living spirit.

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."

And the Comforter is the Spirit of truth, as Jesus said. When the Spirit of truth is come into your consciousness it will guide or lead you into all truth. Do we turn to this Spirit of truth with the confidence that

we should? Do we recognize it and follow it as we should? More than that, do we question it as we should? For we are to question, we are to examine, each fresh revelation of the truth, that our understanding of the right may thus be increased; and the more we question, the more we examine, the clearer shall be our recognition. And so, also, the more we understand the character of evil, and finding it in ourselves shall discard it, the greater will be our progress in the pathway mapped out for us by Jesus. Eventually will all evil be entirely purged away, for there is in every man, hidden away perhaps because he has not looked for it, that truth which is of God's own truth.

"For he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

In this same conversation at the time when Jesus first mentions the Comforter he used similar words when, speaking of himself he said, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works," and "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." So it is with the Comforter or Spirit of truth, it is really God Himself speaking through the inner spirit. The rendering of the Revised Version at this place is, "For he shall not speak from himself;

but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come."

"He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

"All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

In the Revised Version the rendering for these two verses reads: "He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you."

"He shall glorify me." He shall glorify the Christ. This means that the Spirit of truth will glorify the Christ, for it will receive or take of that very truth which is God's truth and therefore the Christ's, for, as Jesus says here, "All things that the Father hath are mine." And this truth shall the Comforter show or declare unto you.

The infinite truth of the Father, as portrayed by the Christ, resides in the heart of every human being, dimly or brightly shining according to the attitude of each towards it, and this Comforter, of which Jesus speaks here, leads and directs each child of God into a clearer perception, a deeper knowledge of this truth.

And I venture to say that eventually *all* men will be led to glorify the Christ within, and all will glorify Jesus the Christ, for no man has ever earnestly sought the truth and seeking it has sought to understand the teaching of Jesus, who has not been led to glorify him as the great exponent of all truth.

This is the mission of the Comforter, of the Spirit of truth, which is the Spirit of God. And this Holy Spirit is not afar off but is always near, always close at hand for every one of us, if we will but cultivate our recognition of it. Therefore it is with us now, with us in the silence and darkness of the night, with us in the brilliancy of the noonday sun, on the crowded pavement, or in the quiet of the deep woods, with us at every moment and in every place, always ready to help, always ready to be questioned. And this is not a vague, uncertain, dim ghost of a thought, but an active, living, conscious reality which we may recognize and understand if we will and may always call to our aid. *An ever-present help for every human being, in every time of need!*

XXX

THE PRAYER
(John XVI. 16–33; XVII. 1–19)

JESUS continues his conversation with his disciples in relation to his going away, saying to them:

"A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, (because I go to the Father).[1]

"Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

"They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. (We know not—R. V.)

"Now Jesus knew (perceived—R. V.) that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of (concerning—R. V.) that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

"And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

[1] The words "because I go to the Father" do not occur in the best manuscripts and are omitted in the Revised Version.

Throughout this remarkable conversation Jesus refers to the joy that is to come. There may be sorrow at the present time, but he most emphatically affirms that joy shall be theirs later on, even the joy that cannot be taken away from them. They are to enter into and possess such joy as is like unto his own, an abundant gladness which shall fill one to the brim, even as he had said a short time before, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

"And in that day ye shall ask me nothing."

"In that day ye shall ask *me* nothing." In the Greek, "me" is the emphatic form, and the verb "to ask" is not the same as the word in verse twenty-four. In verse twenty-three, the first "ask" is commonly used in the sense of "to ask questions." Thus, "In that day ye shall ask *me* no question," and this is the rendering given in the Margin of the Revised Version. In that day of great joy therefore, there will be no need of asking questions of Jesus. Hitherto they had been wholly dependent on him. They had looked to him more than to the Father. But with Jesus' earthly mission accomplished, they will commune directly with the Father.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you.

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (that is, *complete*).

Jesus has talked much to them on the subject of asking or praying. He has especially instructed them concerning the true methods of prayer. Now he speaks again concerning it, using merely a different form of expression than when he first said, "Ask, and it shall be given you." Under all his statements concerning prayer we find the same underlying principle: *ask* and *receive,* or, *ask* for whatever you wish and *it shall be given you.* When Jesus says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you," he means just that, "*He will give it you.*" And when he says, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing *in my name,*" he means that they have not yet asked *as he asks,* or in his manner of asking, that is, with the necessary faith and understanding. If in our praying we remember Jesus and his prayers, his great faith, his complete understanding, we shall better comprehend what it means to ask "in his name."

"These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show (tell—R. V.) you plainly of the Father."

Jesus has been speaking much to them in the form

of proverbs or parables, figures of speech, but the hour is coming when he shall no more speak thus but will tell them more plainly about the Father. Many of his deepest truths were uttered in the form of parables or narratives, little stories that conveyed a clearer meaning because of their very simplicity. He thus told them things that could not be told abstractly, or if so told, might fail of reaching the mark. We have an illustration of this in the parable of the Prodigal Son, a tale of such sweetness and strength, such suggestiveness of the truth, as is hardly to be found elsewhere. This story has touched millions of hearts, conveying the truth as probably no plain-spoken lesson would ever have done.

But Jesus says an hour cometh when he will speak no more in proverbs but will tell them plainly of the Father. And it is in connection with this that he says the Comforter is coming, the Spirit of truth, that will lead them into all truth. Jesus knew that this Spirit of truth would reveal to them the great truths of God so clearly that there would be not a shadow of doubt in their hearts. And this is intended for every one, because God has no secrets from any of His children. What He does and is, is for us to know and understand if we will. You remember that Jesus said, " The Father showeth the Son all things that He Himself doeth." " The Son " here refers to the spiritual child

of God. We do not know all these things now, because we do not understand now. And it is true there are many problems which we cannot solve as yet because we have not fitted ourselves to receive the truths concerning them. But I believe absolutely, that in all good time, there shall come to us from the Father, the knowledge by which we shall one day perceive and understand all truths. Philosophers, wise and learned men, speak much about the undiscoverable, the unknowable, that which is beyond the reach of man's intelligence and hidden from him, but Jesus the Christ told a different story. We find this beautifully expressed by him in one of his prayers: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight." [1]

"At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray (make request of—R. V. Margin) the Father for you:

"For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God" (came forth from the Father—R. V.).

"At that day ye shall ask in my name," that is, as I ask, in fullest faith and understanding; and I do not

[1] Luke x. 21.

say that I will then make request of the Father for you, "*for the Father Himself loveth you*"; that is, in that day you will not need that I shall pray the Father for you, because He,—loving you as He does,—will grant that request which you yourself,—having now learned how to ask,—have made directly of Him.

How often in the past we have been to God in prayer with wrong thoughts in our hearts, thoughts of condemnation and regrets, with doubts as to the results, and as to whether He will even hear us. We have not had even the confidence of the little child. Would we not go with confidence to a friend, to one we know and have known to be our true friend, being certain that he cares for us and is able and willing to do the things we ask of him; would we not go to him with great confidence because knowing so well his love for us? How much more then should we go to the heavenly Father with confidence and with faith!

Frequently in the old days we were taught that He is a vengeful, wrathful, angry God; a just God, even if merciful. Let us be grateful that the day of such teachings is practically past. He is a God of love, and He loves us and hears us at all times. Jesus always throughout his teachings laid great stress on the fact of the Father's love for us. And if we would but realize what this love really means, our whole

attitude towards Him would be changed. We should then go to Him in all prayer as He would have us go to Him, without a doubt in our hearts, but knowing, recognizing, perceiving, that the things we are asking for are already ours. Then would come to us such wisdom and understanding as we do not now dream of.

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

"His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

"Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God."

Jesus had told them several times before in this conversation substantially the same thing, in different language to be sure and in a somewhat different connection but practically the same thing, and they had not understood. Now they seem to understand. Is it not often so? A thought is presented to us many times over, and perhaps repeated for a year in varying phrases, and we do not understand, until finally the intended meaning is perceived by us. We even read the words of Jesus over and over again, possibly during a long life, and we do not understand them, until suddenly in a chance moment, there comes a flash of recognition. It is frequently thus that the human

mind works. And so there came this flash of recognition at last to the disciples of Jesus. And Jesus answered them:

"Do ye now believe?
"Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

Jesus was strangely alone on the human side; indeed, the loneliness of his life here on earth is most pathetic. We realize this as we read this conversation through from beginning to end, and we particularly notice it in the questions of his disciples when they so frequently question him of trivial things when Jesus is speaking of great things. How even they continually misunderstood him! And yet no one is really alone, for the Father in His infinity is with every one. It is just as Jesus said here, "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." Nearness does not express this presence of the infinite God. It is more and greater than mere nearness, for if we have the open eye to see, and the open ear to hear, we know that He is everywhere, within us as well as around us. Within the retired place of our inner selves we may find Him and commune with Him there. We are alone often on the human side, but not alone in reality, because God the Father is with each one of us.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer (or, take courage); I have overcome the world."

I have told you these things that through me you may have peace. Why does Jesus speak of peace? They are going to be scattered; the terror is immediately at hand; the night is upon them, the night of darkness and of error. Peace under such circumstances? He has been talking to them about peace and joy from the very beginning, the peace that passeth understanding and the joy that shall be complete, even the peace and the joy that filled his own heart. Why? Because of the presence of God in his life and because of the understanding in his heart of these great truths of God.

He says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." And is it not so? Because of this very world and its doings, we have fear, distress, and lack of peace. Yet of this material world Jesus says, "Take courage, be of good cheer, I have overcome this world." And in connection with this we may quote his wonderful words in the fourteenth chapter, when after telling them of the Comforter he said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

"*I have overcome the world.*" What a statement to make under the circumstances that were impending! Within twenty-four hours he would be hanging from the cross, deserted by all but a few, his work apparently a failure, the world triumphant over his downfall. Yet he stood there in the glory of the truth, saying that he had overcome the world. As indeed he had! For I believe that even at that time, with great darkness hanging over him, that Jesus comprehended that darkness, seeing through the appearance of error and wrong to the light beyond; that he divined even his own resurrection and understanding it, realized that truth shall prevail. And in that resurrection is the very proof of his words here, the import of which has sounded down through all the ages since. He had and did overcome the world of materiality and death. Then if that be so why are we so unbelieving now? Why can we not take his simple statement here, and accepting it, *know* that the world *is* overcome, and that truth is triumphant now and always?

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." (Rev. Ver. reads, "that the Son may glorify Thee.")

"Glorify Thy Son; the hour is come." The time is near, and Jesus is looking out into the glory of the

perfection of God, the Father; and looking too for the glory of the Son, asking, not for himself alone, for the burden of this prayer is for others. Though he stood there within an hour of arrest, and within so short a time of his death, yet his prayer was not for himself but it was for all men.

Who is the Son, the Son of the Father? If you do not remember, then go back to the fifth chapter of John and there read who "*the Son*" is. You will find that Jesus teaches that "the Son" is the divine being in every man, the spiritual self. And you will find there that Jesus meant just what John did in his philosophy in the opening chapter of this Gospel, when he said, "That which hath been made was life in Him." That which hath been made was of His life, even God's life. Thus each and every being is divine, each and every one is a child of God. And so it is for you and for me that Jesus prayed here, for the Son in you and in me, that we may recognize the glory of our own being. For, "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him." He that honoreth not the divine life in himself, honoreth not the Father who gave that divine life. And so through the revelation of that life in each individual is the Son glorified, and by honoring the divine life in ourselves do we glorify our Father which is in heaven.

"As Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given him."

Another rendering of the Greek and one which I prefer reads: "As Thou didst give him authority over all flesh, so that every thing which Thou hast given to him he may give to them, even eternal life." And this may be interpreted as follows: Thou gavest the Son (the spiritual man) authority or power over all flesh (material man); and every thing which Thou hast given to him (the Son), he is to give (or explain) to all who, in their ignorance, may come to him for help or advice, even eternal life; that is, he is even to give them an understanding of eternal life.

The King James Version is perhaps less inclusive in its meaning than the above rendering but the same general interpretation seems to apply to it. "Thou hast given him power over all flesh." The Son has been given power or authority over all materiality, that he may heal the sick, teach the ignorant, comfort the oppressed, and bring out of darkness into eternal life "as many as Thou hast given him," meaning,—as many as God has given him to help, even all those who in ignorance of the truth come to him seeking the way. This passage has to me a great depth of meaning and a wonderful message to the Son, who is the spiritual being, for through his understanding of the truth he is

to reach as many as he may and show to them the way of eternal life. Referring again to the fifth chapter of this Book of John, we read that the Son should do "what he seeth the Father do," and, "the Father showeth him all things that He Himself doeth," for, "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also because he is the Son of man."[1] The Son of man, or the spiritual being born of God, has been given the power to judge correctly, and, as the record reads, "that he should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given him," which as I understand it means, that he should come into the recognition of this eternal life, not for himself alone, but for all others with whom he has to do.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

And eternal life is understood through a true knowledge of God and of His Son, Jesus the Christ, whom He sent to be a Saviour to mankind through his teachings of the truth. When we at last enter into a true recognition of God we perceive the meaning of the "life eternal" and know that we are a part of it. We

[1] Compare also, John iii. 35, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand."

know, too, that "that which hath been made was life in Him," and thus that we, ourselves, are created out of His own life, being as it were but a spark from the great substance of God's infinite existence, yet as eternal as His life.

"I have glorified Thee on the earth."

I have manifested Thee, I have honored Thee; with my thoughts and my words I have clothed Thee with splendor. I have revealed Thy truths; I have glorified Thee on the earth. And has any man glorified God as Jesus the Christ did? His words are full of the great glory of God throughout his entire teachings.

"I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.

"And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

"Glorify Thou me with Thine own self." Aye, *with Thine own self!* And we too, can pray that same prayer, for we also in the essential of our being are divine, and therefore worthy to pray that prayer. It is just this that Jesus would have us know and understand; it is what he meant when he said he came that we "might have life and that we might have it more abundantly." He desired that every child of God

should have a more abundant understanding of life and of his relation to the Father. "With the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Eternal life is without end and without beginning; therefore Jesus the Christ and each spiritual being existed in the life of God "before the world was" or, before the manifestation of this earth life.

"I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me; and they have kept Thy word.

"Now they have known (know—R. V.) that all things whatsoever Thou hast given me are of (from—R. V.) Thee.

"For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send me."

I have manifested Thy name or Thy truth unto those whom Thou hast given me. "Now they know that all things whatsoever Thou hast given me are from Thee." Jesus himself knew that the Father had "given all things" into his hands, and had repeatedly said so from the first, as, when at one time he told his disciples, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father," and again when he said, "All things that the Father hath are mine."

[1] "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."

The Revised Version reads: "While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name *which* Thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition." "*Which*" in the Greek refers to "*name,*" and this is the meaning given in the Revised Version, whereas the same word in verse six refers to "*men*" and is translated "*whom*" in the Revised Version.

Many have read this passage with fear and trembling, missing the meaning of the translation, and each fearing that he himself might be a "son of perdition." I do not think this refers to the loss of any child of God but rather to the destruction of evil. As we know, Jesus sometimes personifies evil, as in the eighth chapter of this Gospel where he says, "Ye are of your father the devil. . . . He was a murderer from the beginning." "None of them is lost; not one of them perished, but the son of perdition." Or, none of them is lost but the son of delusion or error; none is lost but that which was lost always; none is destroyed but that which was destroyed from the beginning.

[1] Verses 9, 10 and 11 are omitted here but will be considered in the following chapter.

Nothing at any time was lost but evil and all its offspring, that is, sin, wrong, error in all its forms, or whatever may be classed with the *not-good*. Evil in the end returns to its own nothingness. Thus this terrible thing which has so frightened the world for centuries and which we express in various ways,—" eternal punishment," " the casting forth into outer darkness " and so on,—becomes, when understood, an entirely different thing from what we had imagined. Like the parable of the sheep and the goats, it is one of the greatest truths presented by Jesus, and is even one of the things that we wish and pray for,—to have our sins cast off and destroyed and put away from us forever. And just as Jesus overcame sin and materiality, so may we do likewise; we shall even overcome the darkness of ignorance through persistent effort, and through allowing the light of truth to shine on every pathway. So this verse can be read with this meaning: While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name, or, I kept them in Thy truth which Thou gavest me to teach, and I have guarded them, and none of them is lost, but the son or offspring of evil is destroyed; or, none of them was destroyed except the son of destruction.

" And now come I to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves."

His joy in the recognition of the truth of God; in the recognition of the goodness of God; and in the recognition that man is divine; his joy also in the understanding of evil and its ultimate destruction and loss of power. Jesus realized that his disciples were already beginning to understand evil and how to overcome it, for he had said sometime before this, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." "*My joy fulfilled in themselves.*" He wished them to be filled full of the joy that so gladdened himself, and he wished them to be able to express it in their own lives. Jesus desired that their joy in the truths which he had taught them might be as complete as his own. That was one great object of his life, that his joy in the understanding of the truth might be fulfilled in us.

"I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

I have given them an understanding of Thy truths and because of their knowledge of spiritual things they cannot be said to be of the world of materiality, even as I am not; therefore the world hath hated them as it always does. "The world" is an expression sometimes employed by Jesus when referring to selfishness and sin and all kindred errors, in contrast to the spiritual life and all things relating to God and His truth.

"I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

The Greek reads: "I do not *ask* that Thou shouldest take them out of the world." Jesus asked the Father to keep His people from the evil, in other words, to keep them in the truth, because in the truth there is no evil. "Keep them from the evil," "*not* that Thou shouldest take them out of the world." We should not pray to be taken out of the world but to be kept from the evil that is in the world. It is not that we are to ignore the evil or even to run away from it; Jesus did not mean that, he wished us to see evil in its true light, its real character, and to know it for what it is. Not to fear it, not to tremble before it, but knowing its true character, to stand firmly and face it and see it disappear, as evil always will disappear in the presence of truth. Thus we do not need to be taken from the world to be freed of evil, we only need to know the world as Jesus knew it, and knowing it, to become victorious over it.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

We feel that Jesus as he went on in this prayer was including all God's children in his asking, and we have

his confirmation of this when in the twentieth verse he said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe." And even in the most limited sense in which we may accept his meaning, we feel that he was including all those who do not understand fully and who often fail in the time of trial, even such as those who ran away and left him and who declared they did not know him. And if he was praying for such, then he was praying for such as we ourselves,—those like ourselves,—even for you and for me. And this but introduces the following great utterance:

"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth."

"Sanctify or consecrate them in Thy truth." "Sanctify" means "to make holy or sacred, to consecrate." The word here translated "sanctify" is from the same root as the word that is translated "holy" in the expression, "The Holy Spirit." "*Make them holy through Thy truth.*" And we have here in this passage the answer to Pilate's question, "What is truth?" It is a question that the world has been asking throughout all history, and which philosophy has diligently discussed, yet in all its discussing has never satisfactorily answered. But here in a sentence of four words is the perfect and complete answer with

no mystery about it. What is truth? *"Thy word is truth."*

"Thy word is truth." That which Thou hast expressed, that which Thou hast manifested, is truth. That which God has brought into being as we say sometimes; that which He has sent; that which comes from Him and which is of His substance; *that* is truth. The divine of God, wherever it may be found, is truth, even the divinity within each being. Every expression of God's is truth, and anything which seems to exist but is not of Him, is not of the truth, and therefore has no true or real existence.

"As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."

Jesus said a similar thing to his disciples after his resurrection, when he stood in their midst: "Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." And how was he sent into the world? He had no diploma, no official script from any government, or school, or college, or church of any kind, none whatever. All such repudiated him; those in political power, the priesthood, the scholars, all repudiated him. He had no visible authority for anything that he said or did. But as the Father sent him into the world, so Jesus sent his disciples into the world. He sent them out to teach and to heal, with no warrant for

their going but their knowledge of the truth. That was their authority for teaching and healing and they possessed no other. So Jesus sent these twelve men, his disciples, who might be called his pupils, his scholars, out on their mission. He sent them as God had sent himself. And so is every man sent; so does God send every one who has perceived the truth. We all know how this is, for we all have felt the quickening of the spirit within, when we recognized a truth, and the great desire to impart it at once to our friend. That is God's warrant for our going forth to do our work in the world.

"And for their sakes I sanctify (or consecrate) myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

"Sanctified" is from the same Greek word as the word "hallowed" which we have in our Lord's Prayer, —"*Hallowed* be Thy name." The Greek word really means "to make holy, to hallow, to sanctify." For their sake, for the sake of these twelve, and for the sake of every one, Jesus made himself holy, and kept himself so, that all might be made holy through the truth. This holiness is accomplished through the truth alone, through our recognition, our perception of the truth, and through our knowledge of the truth, resulting in actions that make for true holiness and true

blessedness. And it is accomplished in no other way, the truth acting in you and thus sanctifying, making holy, not only yourself but others through you. The sanctification, the holiness, that Jesus the Christ desired and prayed for, is absolute, complete consecration, and must come about through the individual action of each of God's children throughout the entire world.

XXXI

THE PRAYER THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE
(John XVII. 9, 10, 11 and 20–26)

"I PRAY for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me; for they are Thine.

"And all mine are Thine, and Thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. ("All *things* that are mine are Thine" is the rendering of the Revised Version.)

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

The Revised Version reads: "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are." You remember that Jesus said in connection with the parable of the Good Shepherd, "I and the Father are one";[1] and also that he said to Philip on another occasion, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He repeatedly referred to this idea of the "oneness" of himself with the Father; and on several occasions he used expressions which admit of no other explanation than the thought of a unity, a oneness, existing among all men; a universal brotherhood binding all men together. We

[1] In Chapter XIX, the philosophy underlying the statement, "I and the Father are one," is discussed at some length.

have been accustomed to think of this unity or oneness as existing more especially between Jesus and the Father, but Jesus never said so, and if we study his words carefully we shall find that he included every one in his statements on this subject. When once understood, there is really no mystery whatever about the idea of a universal oneness, and Jesus' words "I and the Father are one" are merely a simple statement of a plain fact, but one of tremendous importance in our consideration of man as a spiritual being. For we are of course, in this discussion of the universal oneness, referring to the spiritual being, the spiritual man, that which is the essential of each man, or that which is the reality of his divine existence; the *real you.*

We should consider the words of Jesus in this prayer, and indeed in all his prayers, in the light of his rule concerning prayer, "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, *believe that ye have received* them, and ye shall have them," thus bringing the reception of the thing asked for close home; not putting it off for some future time of realization, but expecting it *now.* Believe *now,* that we have received the thing asked for, and *we shall have it.* And it is to be noted that there is not the slightest expression of doubt in this statement of Jesus. And so here, this prayer of Jesus, "That they may be one, even as we are one," which he uttered for his disciples and for all those who be-

lieved on him, is also but a plain and confident expression of the truth as perceived by him, a truth which we have failed to recognize in its completeness, but which we may recognize and accept if we choose. For the perception of even so great a truth as this is ours, if we will but believe in its possibility. It is as Jesus said when he healed the man possessed of an evil spirit, "If thou canst believe, *all things are possible to him that believeth.*" [1]

"That they may be one, as we are." The central and important point in this prayer, three times repeated, is "*that they may be one*"; referring to the spiritual oneness of every man with every other man,—that oneness which unites each child of God, with every other one. Jesus prayed that they all might be one even as he and the Father were one. We may well contemplate this relationship existing between the Father and Jesus the Christ, and between the Father and every one of His children, and the more we study it the more wonderful it will appear to us. So this is the prayer for his disciples and not only for his disciples of that time but for all those who shall believe in the truth. He prays that they may recognize this oneness existing among themselves, one with another, and each with God; a universal oneness that binds them together in spiritual harmony. We might say that

[1] Mark ix. 23.

Jesus is asking for our realization of our *true* condition one with another, a condition already existent but not yet understood or perceived by us,—that we as spiritual beings may realize that we are already one in spiritual brotherhood.

Jesus continues his prayer in the same line of thought, after uttering those impressive words considered in the preceding chapter [1] and which refer more particularly to his immediate disciples: how he sent them out in the same way that he himself was sent, and how he sanctified them, or made them holy, and made himself holy for their sakes. Most wonderful prayer, for a most wonderful object! Seeking the absolute holiness, the mission of the pure spirit. His prayer now assumes a broader scope, including not only the disciples but all those who shall believe in him, or in the truth.

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

"That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.

"And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."

"That they all may be one." The same prayer that he has just made, an utterance of the same petition,

[1] Verses 12–19.

but to this he now adds, "As Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee." This defines the kind of oneness which he would have existent among those who believe in him, and who believe in God, the Father. Jesus would have us as one in that perfect harmony one with another which is the natural relationship of all God's children; he would have us one in that unity which he defines here when he utters these wonderful words referring to the relationship between himself and God, "As Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee." Thus Jesus wished for all mankind nothing short of the same relationship which he recognized as existing between himself and God,—God the Father in us, and we in Him.

"That they also may be one in us." When we do indeed realize our oneness with God, and with Jesus the Christ, then shall we understand our true relationship with each other, perceiving that spiritual oneness which Jesus declared as binding together all mankind.

We may hold our neighbor, our brother, even our enemy, aloof from ourselves, through certain conditions, through dislike perhaps, through all sorts of things, even through mental conditions of our own making. We may say this man is a bad man, and that he is not fit for one to associate with. Thus we push him away. But this is occasioned by *our* thought regarding the man, and is the result clearly of our own

thinking. What did Jesus say early in his ministry, recognizing as he did the separation caused by anger, and by hate, and all such things? He said, "But I say unto you, *Love* your enemies." When we have put away the thought of enmity, that thought which creates aloofness, when we have put away, out of ourselves, all discordant thoughts connected with enmity and hate and all like offenses,—for mind you, Jesus is not talking about the enemy, he is talking *to you,* and *to me* with regard to what we ourselves have to do with ourselves,—when we have put out of mind all such thoughts against our brother or our enemy, then and only then are we in a position to follow this great precept and to love our enemies.

Thus it is not a question of what the enemy is to do concerning us, but what *we* have to do concerning him. Before we can love, we must put away hate, and having put this out of mind,—which we may do if we choose because we can control all our thinking,—then we may enter into that relationship which Jesus expresses by the word "love," and obeying his precept we may enter into that union, that oneness, which he defines as the oneness existing between the Father and himself. This is for you to do, for each one to do. And this each may do, for as before stated, it is ourselves we have to correct and not the other man. It is *we* who hold ourselves aloof, and it is through thus

holding ourselves aloof and separate from others that we fail to recognize our true relationship to God and to each other. And so long as we do this, we cannot enjoy this relationship in all its beauty and perfection.

So this recognition of the truth depends not on others but on ourselves. We send missionaries, not only to foreign lands, but even in our own country and to our own neighbors, and in doing so we are but following the example of Jesus himself. The first Christian missionaries were his disciples, whom he sent out into the surrounding country. But after all, the true recognition is by ourselves. We may help others to a clearer understanding, but in the last analysis it is one's own individual work; each must recognize a truth for himself, he cannot perceive it for another. He can only aid that other and then leave him to his own perceptions.

"And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them." Glory here means simply holiness, purification. Remember how Jesus for their sakes sanctified himself and how he prayed for their sanctification. And now he says that he has conferred upon them the glory which the Father has given him. And he has given them that glory for a reason; and this reason a repetition of the statement already twice expressed, "That they may be one, even as we are one." That they may be one through the recognition of that glory

which is the glory of perfection and holiness, and which is the glory resulting from complete forgiveness and love. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" admits of nothing less than complete, perfect cleansing of ourselves from all error. When this is accomplished we must necessarily be filled with the glory of God and of His truth. Continuing, Jesus expresses again the same idea though in a different form:

"I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

"I in them," meaning the Christ in us; "and Thou in me," signifying the indwelling spirit of God. Jesus has already said in the conversation which precedes this prayer that if we do the things he tells us to do, both he and the Father will come unto us, and will make their abode with us. These words here are but a repetition of the same idea. They are an expression of that spiritual oneness which is consciously felt within the inner self, and which binds together all spiritual beings in a perfect harmony. Thus if we live the Christlike life, and think Christlike thoughts, then and only then do we become literally one with Christ and with God and so with each other.

"That they may be made perfect in one." The Revised Version renders it, "that they may be perfected

into one," meaning, that they may be made perfect through becoming as one. And when we do perceive and understand what this spiritual oneness really signifies, I believe we shall indeed be made perfect, at least we shall be well on the road towards perfection. And this reminds us that when Jesus said, "Love your enemies, . . . that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven," he also added, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (R. V.). This is a marvelous statement, yet all his teaching aims at nothing short of that. When we can love our enemies we shall do so because we realize our relation to God and also their relation to the same divine Father, then shall we be conscious of this oneness that Jesus says so much about and which he evidently had in mind when he prayed, "that they may be made perfect in one." And in loving our enemies we shall truly manifest our sonship to God, we shall then indeed show that we *are* children of our heavenly Father. We therefore shall be perfect even as He is perfect.

We all are striving for perfection, perhaps doing the best we know as we see and understand ourselves, to improve ourselves, and to live better and more perfect lives. But here through the teaching of Jesus is the way made both plain and simple, and by it may we arrive at perfection. I know it is frequently said that

perfection is an impossibility, yet absolute perfection *is* a possibility, and will yet be attained, for I do not believe that Jesus ever asked us to do anything that is impossible.

We may even arrive at this conclusion from a scientific point of view and find it possible. Perfection is within the reach of every human being. Of course it cannot be attained at once, but there is a way by which man may train himself towards it continually, and that is simply by the abandonment of wrong or discordant thinking.[1] Every discordant thought rejected is one step towards perfection; and every discordant or wrong thought can be put away until none are left. The very fact that we can cease thinking one thought and think another, means the positive certainty that if we will, we can control all our thoughts; we can entirely master our own thinking. Thus it is possible to cease thinking all discordant and erroneous thoughts, and that done, our minds will be filled only with the thoughts of perfection, only with true, harmonious and beautiful thoughts. This accomplished we can control our lives in every particular.

"And that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me."

"That the world may know that Thou hast sent

[1] See *Right and Wrong Thinking and their Results.*

me." This is the same thought that is expressed in verse twenty-one, only the word there is "believe,"—"that the world may *believe* that Thou hast sent me." Now Jesus goes a step further, and prays for this oneness and this perfection,—"that the world may *know* that Thou hast sent me." He has reached the ultimate and supreme conclusion, for now he says, "*that the world may know that Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me.*"

We elevate the Christ to a great height in our imagination, and yet we have never raised him quite high enough, for we have never yet been able to compass within our understanding what he really was and is, nor the height and depth, the length and breadth of his teaching. And then too we have held, consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or otherwise, the thought that somehow Jesus the Christ was a particular favorite with God. We have looked upon him as in some way favored beyond ourselves, standing in a place unapproachable by us and holding a regard from the Father which is not for any other person. Now, as Peter said, "God is no respecter of persons,"[1] caring more for one than for another, but He is impartial. We believe this to be true, and yet, perhaps unconsciously to ourselves, we have held this idea of partiality in our minds. But Jesus sets such an idea en-

[1] Acts x. 34.

tirely aside here when he says, "That the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me."

Words can go no farther than that. Yet stop a moment and think what you are. Jesus told you to say, "*Our Father* which art in heaven." He has told you also to acknowledge your sonship, to acknowledge that you are a child of God, and that He is your Father. Jesus now further tells us that the Father loves us even as He loves Jesus himself. If we could but once truly realize this, if we could but let it sink into our minds so that it would never be forgotten, it would mean to us more than aught else.

This is the culmination of Jesus' teaching, and everything, through all that he has said, points to this as the great climax, even as it points also to the possibility of absolute perfection of conduct and life. Nowhere does Jesus claim for himself any one thing which he does not set forth as belonging equally to all others. *All* the gifts of God by right of divine inheritance belong equally to all His children, whether or not they are spiritually advanced enough as yet to recognize it. You know that Jesus gave as one of the reasons for his going away: "The works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do; because I go unto the Father." He meant that he had not himself compassed the whole; there were yet greater

works to be done than he had done, and by his going he left his disciples in the position where they were to do not only the works that he had done but greater even than those.

There is one important thing, strongly exemplified in the life of Jesus, which has been much overlooked, and that is, the absolute freedom in which he leaves every human being. And God Himself leaves each one of us in the same absolute freedom. Thus this truth is for us if we choose to accept it; neither the Christ nor the Father forces us into it. It is left to you and to me if we choose, to discard all wrong thoughts, until there is nothing left in our minds but the good, the pure, and the true thoughts. God does not compel men to do this or anything else; He leaves them free in every particular. So it is with Jesus; he has opened the way of truth, and he has shown us this way all along in everything that he has taught, assuring us of the results if we but follow his teachings.

As before stated, Jesus here reaches the climax when he says that the Father loves us as He has loved himself. This is the real conclusion of his prayer, this benediction of love. Though he adds a few more words they are really a repetition of ideas already expressed.

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me: for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

"O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent me.

"And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

This is his final word, a word of deepest love, than which nothing higher, nothing greater is possible. It is a petition for all mankind that the love of God for the Christ may dwell in you, and that the spiritual presence of the Christ himself be also within you.

XXXII

ARREST AND TRIAL OF JESUS
(John XVIII. 1–38)

We come now to an abrupt change in the course of the narrative. Jesus has finished his teaching. The time for his departure has arrived. He has given his disciples a definite farewell in that wonderful benediction of love with which he ended his prayer in the chapter we have just studied. We now take up his arrest and the final days of his ministry.

"When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples."

For the full understanding of this story, it is necessary to read all four of the accounts; each Gospel contains something which the others do not. Particularly is this the case with John, for in this account as in almost everything which he narrates, John omits many of the facts which the other Gospels have noted. We will confine ourselves mainly to the Gospel of John,

supplementing it with the others only as there seems to be a need in order to have a better understanding.

John says that Jesus went into the garden with his disciples. Matthew and Mark give the name of the place as "Gethsemane," meaning "oil-press" or the place where the oil was pressed from the olives. Gethsemane, where Jesus retired with his disciples after the Last Supper, is understood to be at the foot of the Mount of Olives on the bank of the Kidron (or Cedron). Jesus was in the habit of resorting to this place and with the disciples had frequently spent the night there in the open air. This "garden" was probably a piece of ground enclosed by a wall or fence of some sort, and doubtless this enclosure contained a press. The spot is still pointed out on the other side of the brook Kidron at the foot of the Mount of Olives, but there is no absolute certainty as to this being the actual place.

"And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples.

"Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons."

There was quite probably a large number of men. The Revised Version renders it a "band or cohort of soldiers." A cohort was an armed band or body of

men which in old Roman days consisted of from 500 to 600 soldiers. The men given Judas were put under his direction by the chief priests and Pharisees, and probably the officers were those who were most in earnest concerning the removal of Jesus. Presumably these officials were in part, officers of the temple under the direction of the priests, and in part, a delegation from the garrison in the fort and in Jerusalem, which was held by the Romans.

"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come (or are coming) upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?"

John omits all notice of the prayer in the garden and of the incidents connected with it. Also he does not mention the kiss of betrayal which according to Matthew and Mark was the sign agreed upon by Judas with the officials. Luke merely states that, "Judas . . . drew near unto Jesus to kiss him; but Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Thus Jesus stands forth before this mixed company of people, containing besides the officials and guards, probably others who have gathered in the crowd out of curiosity. So we picture him standing there in front of this armed band, in the simple majesty of his personality; one man facing the multitude as he says unto them, "Whom seek ye?"

"They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

"As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground."

These men, notwithstanding their hatred of Jesus and in spite of the simplicity of his words and manner, must have felt the majesty of his presence for, as soon as Jesus had spoken the words "I am he," they, according to one translation, "fell backward to the ground." They could not maintain themselves in the presence of this simple, unpretentious man, fearlessly standing there alone before them and their weapons of warfare. It was the might of the truth, or the consciousness of the "I AM" of God expressed through Jesus, which swept them off their feet.

"Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

"Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."

Or, "If ye seek *me,* here am I, but permit these disciples to go their way." Observe that even in this critical moment Jesus is thinking of others and he offers no resistance. In reading his precept, "Resist not evil," how far have we been able to understand its depth of meaning? In all our study of this precept,

in all our thoughts concerning it, even while remembering his teaching regarding forgiveness, I doubt if we have fully fathomed the meaning of these words as uttered by Jesus, "*Resist not evil.*" Here stood a man who had never harmed any one, who had violated not one Jewish law, who had done only good to his fellow men; whose one great object was that men might know God, might know Him as the Father; and might know Him not as a vengeful God, but as a God of love. He had given no man any occasion for an attack of violence, was absolutely with no fault in him, as Pilate himself afterwards said. Armed only with an armor-plate of truth against which the world battled, he, through the majesty and power of his spiritual presence, overthrew the troop that had come to take him. He obeyed to the last requirement his own precept of non-resistance, that precept which the world not only fails to understand, but obedience to which the world believes would bring disaster upon the human race. Yet Jesus obeyed it, offering no resistance to these men.

At the time of all the agony of Gethsemane mentioned in the first three Gospels, when Jesus prayed that wonderful prayer there in the garden, three times repeating practically the same words, he yet could say, "Nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done." Even with all this agony Jesus was without resistance even

in thought it appears, for although he said, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me," [1] yet he immediately added, "not my will, but Thine, be done." Not that it was the will of the Father that he should die suffering on the cross, but that it was the will of the Father that, living the truth as he had lived it, he should continue so to live it to the end. And a portion of this great truth was contained in these precepts of his which he himself never violated,—"Resist not evil" and "Love your enemies." Such a life was according to the will of God, and it was His will and His truth which Jesus followed. Majesty, grandeur, sublimity in human action never rose to a greater height. And yet it is possible for every one of God's children to live as Jesus did. But even his disciples who had been with him throughout these years, listening to his teaching, witnessing the marvelous works that he did, so far failed to understand his principles of non-resistance that Simon Peter drew his sword and smote the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. What a contrast between the two; Peter the man and Jesus the Christ! Peter, smiting with the sword, stands for erring humanity; Jesus, healing the smitten ear,[2] making good the error of man, stands for the truth of God.

[1] Compare John xii. 27, where Jesus says, "Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour."

[2] Luke xxii. 51.

Since that day some of the bloodiest wars that history has known have been fought in the name of Jesus. Peter was no farther wrong in wielding his sword against the high priest's servant, than professed Christians have been since, when not merely has an ear been cut off, but thousands and tens of thousands have been slain in red-handed butchery, because they thought they were serving the will of Jesus and doing him honor. In spite of his great precept, "Love your enemies," men even to this day still think it right to kill one another.

"Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my (*the*—R. V.) Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

And how we have misinterpreted this! Blinded, as Peter was, the world has taken "the cup" to mean the cup of despair and torment, of suffering and death. Yet God knows none of these things. God, the loving Father, never willed that Jesus or any other one of His children should suffer, not even one iota. The cup that the Father gave to Jesus was the cup that He gives to you and to me; and it is the cup of truth, the cup of absolute rightness and of non-resistance, that we may drain it to the very bottom, as Jesus did. To us, looking at it from Peter's viewpoint, it appears to be very bitter; indeed to the human it appears as bitter-

ness itself. And, looking at it from the human side alone, it would seem that all that came to Jesus from drinking of this cup was disgrace, suffering, and death. But in reality that which came to *the Christ* was resurrection and life eternal; a resurrection and an eternal life that were known and realized by him, were even expected and understood.

The other Gospels give a few more details not narrated by John. For instance, Luke tells how, when they were at supper, Jesus said to the disciples, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing?" We say to ourselves, many of us, "I know that the teaching of Jesus is right and that I should even give up all I have to those in need, trusting that in so doing I shall lack nothing." And we say, "I wish I could, but it does not look practical, and to tell the truth, I do not dare to." Yet Jesus calls the attention of his disciples here to the very things that men say they do not dare to give up, and the disciples replied that *they lacked nothing.* "Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." Men have used this as an argument for war, and have said that this was Jesus' declaration that the time had come to fight. But what did they reply? They said, "Lord, behold, here are two swords." The twelve had two swords

among them. Jesus knew at this time what was ahead of him and that the hour of his arrest was close at hand, yet he said unto them, "It is enough." Two enough for such an armed band as was coming out to meet them? From one point of view it sounds absurd, but looked at in the direct light of Jesus' teaching, it is easy to understand. It *was* enough. Even the one that Peter had was enough, as we have just read, for Jesus made of that an object lesson, reproving Peter and telling him to return his sword to its place. Never under any circumstances, no matter what the hour or the occasion,—for there was never an occasion which seemed to warrant fighting more than this one,—was the sword to be used.

Matthew gives additional words of Jesus at this time, when, after reproving Peter, Jesus continues, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" There was only one-tenth of a legion of Roman soldiers there in the cohort that had come out with Judas. But Jesus could pray the Father and He would send for his relief more than twelve legions. Indeed, all that was needed, if he so desired, was to maintain the force of his spiritual existence and God-given power, and exerting that great power at his will, not a man of them all could have touched him. Jesus *knew* this but he offered no re-

sistance. Had he done so the greatest object of his entire life would have failed of accomplishment. He had himself said, "Resist not evil," and he did not.

"Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

"And led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year."

Probably there was never a more politically corrupt priesthood than that which ruled at Jerusalem at that time, nor one exerting greater power. Annas seems to have been a highly influential person. He had himself been high priest for a number of years. Four of his sons were then successively appointed to the office of high priest, until at this time it had devolved upon Caiaphas, who was the son-in-law of Annas. Annas was thus at the head of a powerful faction. He was a man of dominating influence and seems to have been the most important personality among the priesthood at that time. This was the condition of things at the time of the trial of Jesus. So to Annas, not high priest in reality, but wielding the authority of high priest, they first took Jesus, afterwards taking him to Caiaphas, acting high priest, for a more formal trial.

"Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people."

Caiaphas was a prophet in that instance, though unwittingly so. What he evidently had in mind when he uttered those words [1] was not, as we interpret it, that in the death of Jesus the world would be saved, but that through his death Judea and the Jews might be saved from political destruction. "Caiaphas was the leading spirit at the council which was held to devise measures to stem the rising current when the popularity of Jesus had received a powerful impulse from the raising of Lazarus. His counsel was to put Jesus to death before a tumult of the people should bring down upon the nation the vengeance of the Romans. His action upon this occasion illustrates his characteristic disregard of justice and religion, and shows with what adroitness he could hide self-interest under the cloak of patriotism." [2]

"The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine" (teaching—R. V.).

That he must die had already been determined upon, but his enemies realized that they must have the formality of some excuse for his death. Jesus answered:

"I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

[1] John xi. 50.

[2] Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

"Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said."

The teaching of Jesus had been open and free, as he said, "In secret have I said nothing." This is no attempt at defense; it is merely a plain statement of the way he went about his business. For three years Jesus had taught; and his teaching was to the world, to Jew and Gentile, to any who would listen. For the past week he had been teaching in the temple almost continually, under the very eyes of the priesthood, and in the very presence of the scribes and Pharisees. There were many who could be brought in there to testify as to what he had taught. Thus it was a wise appeal.

"And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?"

There was nothing disrespectful in this reply of Jesus to the high priest. Jesus merely made an appeal to him to bring in others, any who had heard his teachings, that they might bear witness to what he had said. The high priest need not take his testimony alone, he could ask any of those who had listened to his words. And Jesus stands there before them, unafraid, speak-

ing freely, yet gentle to the last, unresisting to the end. So he replies to the officer:

"If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?"

Thus ends, according to John, the first episode of the trial. Mark tells us a little more about this interview or examination before the high priest, some things which seem to be necessary in explanation of what follows. For instance, in the fourteenth chapter of Mark we read: "The high priest asked him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" This title, "The Blessed," was a popular form of expression among the Jews to indicate the Supreme Being. And Jesus answers this question by saying, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." This not only to the high priests but to the whole world! And if every man were to live the truth as Jesus lived it, he also would sit on the right hand of power and each would recognize the Son of man in all his glory. They would need only to perceive and to live the truth of God and all evil would disappear from before them. But the high priests did not interpret his words in this way. To continue in Mark, "Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think

ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death." Now this is one of the things which John does not mention. The fact is that under the Jewish law the man who blasphemed was deemed guilty of a capital crime, but under the Roman law he was guilty of no offense. The Roman law took no note of such things.

Jesus then had been before Annas and examined; he had been to Caiaphas, and these things had occurred, and then they led him from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment to obtain permission to have him put to death. It was still very early in the morning, probably between four and six o'clock, when Jesus was led away from the high priest's house to the governor's residence, where Pilate, the procurator, was accustomed to stay when in Jerusalem. The night had been spent in that upper chamber with his disciples, at the Last Supper as we call it; then afterwards in the Garden of Gethsemane; and then in the two examinations before Annas and Caiaphas. Evidently there had been some sort of an understanding, for six o'clock in the morning seems rather early for Pilate to be sitting in judgment on a case of this kind.

"Pilate was the Roman procurator or governor of Judea, which was under Roman law to a certain extent. But while Judea was thus directly governed by Rome, a large measure of local self-government was

allowed. Death sentences required the governor's confirmation and were executed by him. The tolerant Roman rule showed much respect for the customs and prejudices of the Jewish people. It aimed at as large liberty as was consistent with order and tribute. Most of the difficulties in Judea arose from the religious zeal and intractable disposition of the Jews themselves. Pilate came to Judea contemporaneously with the appearance of John the Baptist, and his rule covered the period of Jesus' ministry and of the first establishment of Christianity in Judea." [1]

"And they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover."

According to Jewish ideas, a man must not enter the house of the Gentiles lest he by so doing be defiled, so that he could not partake of the feast of the passover. He could not worship in the temple on this great occasion unless he were ceremonially clean. So as his accusers refused to enter the house, Jesus was sent in to Pilate in the judgment hall. Pilate then went out to them and demanded:

"What accusation bring ye against this man?"

"They seem to have expected him to confirm their

[1] Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

sentence without inquiry, a fact which illustrates the large authority conceded by the Romans to the native court. But Pilate refused to act without reasons. When they suddenly cried, 'If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee,' he contemptuously remarked, 'Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law,' thus forcing them to admit that they could not secure their purpose except through him, for they reply, 'It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.' The position of Pilate fully warranted this haughty expression of authority; but he was probably actuated in this instance by the desire to do justice, or at least to prevent the injustice which they intended." [1]

The Jews had fully determined on the death of Jesus, and they had found one thing only, the crime of blasphemy which, under their own laws, was punishable by death, but not under the Roman law. Being forced to present charges of some sort, and knowing the uselessness of bringing forward the only one they really can accuse him of,—that of blasphemy,—they make three false accusations against him, for in Luke we read: "They began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a King."

[1] Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

"Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

"Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

"Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?"

The governor seems to have been impressed with the demeanor of Jesus as that of no ordinary prisoner, and in this more or less private interview the disposition and character of Pilate specially appear. Jesus freely answered his questions, and explained the entirely unworldly nature of his kingdom. He dealt with the Roman throughout as with one not actuated by malice.

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants[1] fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

Following is a closer rendering of the Greek: "If *of this world* were my kingdom, my officers, (those under my authority), would *be fighting,* (*i. e., now*) that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from this source."

Nothing but these words of Jesus is really needed

[1] "Officers" as in verses 3, 12, 18 and 22, and so translated in the Revised Version, Margin.

to show us his true mission. And behind these words are all those three years of his life, when he went about Judea, teaching and healing, and doing good in every way; those three years of preaching and living his great precepts,—the greatest of all being, "*Love your enemies.*"

"Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then?"

The idea conveyed by the Greek is that Pilate *expects* the answer "*Yes,*" as if he said, "You are a king then, are you not?" Jesus' answer shows this, for he says in reply:

"Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

"Every one who is of the truth hears my voice;" that is, the spiritual being, whose longing for the truth is greater than his desire for earthly things, hears my voice and understands. We cannot wonder that Pilate failed to comprehend when Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world," and that if his kingdom were an earthly one his followers would fight to prevent his delivery to the Jews. When Pilate asks, "Art thou not then a king?" Jesus neither affirms nor denies,

simply stating, "Thou sayest that I am a king." Jesus then makes a definite statement as to his life and work by saying, "For this I have been born; and for this I have come into the world, that I may testify to the truth." For the kingship of the Christ was the kingship of the truth and that alone.

"Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all."

Or as in the Revised Version, "I find no crime in him." The exact meaning of the Greek is, "I find no case against him, no occasion for blame." When Pilate said, "What is truth?" he probably was not seriously questioning because he really desired to know, but rather spoke with the flippancy of the man of the world who simply does not understand and apparently does not care to. And this ends the first part of the investigation or trial before Pilate.

XXXIII

TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF JESUS
(John XVIII. 39, 40; and XIX.)

So this was Pilate's verdict: "I find in him no fault at all"; and from this time on, he really attempted to find some means by which he might set Jesus free. He continues to the Jews:

"But ye have a custom,[1] that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?"

This directly shows Pilate's willingness and even his desire to release Jesus. From the first, he not only made up his mind that Jesus was innocent of the charges brought against him, and had done nothing to warrant death, but he began immediately, in so far as he was able, to do what he could to set him free. But the people, led by the chief priests, cried:

"Not this man, but Barabbas."

"Now Barabbas was a robber"; probably the leader of one of the many bands that were ravaging the country under the pretext of some political scheme. From

[1] See Matt. xxvii. 15.

that time until the fall of Judea the country was continually disturbed by these marauders.

Jesus was from Galilee, and Galilee was included in the territory of Herod, who was at that time in Jerusalem. Herod, at least outwardly, was more or less of a Jew, and Pilate and Herod had been under strained relations. So Pilate, perhaps to show his friendliness, sent Jesus to Herod. Now Herod had heard much of Jesus and wished to see him, and as the record states, he was in hopes to have seen some miracle wrought by him. Whatever the interview may have been it ended simply in Herod's sending Jesus back to Pilate. He refused to accept any responsibility, only indicating by his mockery his contempt for the claims of Jesus.

"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him."

Apparently Pilate in thus scourging Jesus was simply offering a weak compromise merely to please the Jews, and still hoping for the release of Jesus. Among the Romans scourging was the usual preliminary of execution, and the man who was sentenced to death was turned over to the soldiers for this punishment. These soldiers were not Jews but, having been quartered in that vicinity, they had heard of Jesus and seemed to take delight, as ignorant people are apt to,

in taunting one whom but recently they had looked upon as in some respects above them. So Jesus was charged with claiming to be a king, and they placed a crown of thorns on his head, and put on him a purple robe. Purple was the color of the Emperor of Rome, thus the crown and the purple were signs of royalty, of kingship; and so did they mock at him, and they said:

"Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands (with *rods*—R. V. Margin).

"Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him."

Here is the second appeal of Pilate following close on the first one. He had sent Jesus to Herod evidently with the hope that Herod would take charge of the case because Jesus, being from Galilee, belonged in Herod's jurisdiction. This having failed and the scourging having taken place, he goes out to them and again he says that Jesus is innocent. And evidently Pilate's idea in this particular case was to arouse their pity, for he brought Jesus out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, probably with the marks of the scourging upon him, and the blood on his face and garments. And Pilate said unto them: "Behold the man!"

The spectacle must have been enough to soften the hardest heart, for, remember all that Jesus had just been through! There was the Supper with his disciples and the long conversation afterwards; the betrayal of Judas and the agony in the garden; the arrest and the trial before Annas and Caiaphas, then before Pilate and Herod, and again before Pilate; and finally the scourging.

"When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him."

And among this assemblage of people, led by the chief priests and officers, were presumably many who, only a few days before, had entered Jerusalem with Jesus, shouting "Hosanna," greeting him as their king, and proclaiming their devotion to him. The change that had come about in less than one short week was remarkable. It began with their failure to understand the real position of Jesus. It resulted from their mistaken idea that the Messiah was to be a man at the head of the nation, literally the king of the Jews. The people thoroughly believed, even the twelve disciples believed, that the Messiah was to take the reins of temporal authority and rule the nation. But Jesus had declined to do this, so their idea of the Messiah had fallen down utterly. They, being under the Roman yoke, were looking for him to emancipate them

from Roman rule. Thus he had completely disappointed them, and judging them as we might ourselves under similar circumstances, it is hardly to be wondered at that there should come this revulsion of feeling, and that even in this mob who now cried out for his crucifixion there should be some who also had cried upon his entry into Jerusalem, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel." But Pilate says in answer to their cries of "Crucify him":

"Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him." [1]

For the third time Pilate declares that he finds no fault in Jesus; he practically says, "He is not guilty; I find nothing about him to warrant death." The Greek indicates that his words should be emphasized thus: "Take *you* him and crucify him, for *I* find no fault in him." As if he said, "On *your* shoulders be the responsibility of his death, as for me I wash my hands of the affair." And according to Matthew we read that when Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man: see ye to it." [2]

[1] Compare Acts iii. 13.
[2] Matt. xxvii. 24, Revised Version.

"The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself (the) Son of God."

The word "*the*" does not occur in the Greek. So the passage may be translated "because he made himself Son of God," or, "because he made himself *a* Son of God."

"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid."

We must remember that Pilate was a Roman, and those who understand Roman religion know what Roman superstition was. We may laugh at the mild superstitions of one another, but to the Roman what we call superstition was a reality. They consulted the clouds, the flight of birds, and signs and omens without number, and believed in them, for it was an age much given to such things. And that was what Pilate had been educated to. Later that very day he was to be harassed by his wife about a dream which she had had regarding Jesus,[1] and dreams with the Romans had far more weight than with the most superstitious of us.

Pilate, as we gather from the facts of history, wanted to do the right thing, but he lacked moral courage; he was weak, and therein seems to have been

[1] Matt. xxvii. 19.

his worst fault. And so when they said that this man had made himself a Son of God, there probably passed through his mind the thought, "Is it possible that this man is divine?" It is indeed no wonder that he was afraid! And so he goes back again into the judgment hall and says unto Jesus:

"Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer."

Pilate had asked him if he were a king, but now he wanted something more, something definite upon which he might base his decision. But Jesus now remains silent. With the character of Pilate and the conditions of that time, together with the howling mob of priests and men outside, it is hardly probable that any statement which Jesus might then have made would have availed, and he himself realized this. "Whence art thou?" Virtually saying, "Are these things that you have said of yourself true? Is this that they say of you true? Art thou indeed a Son of God?" Pilate was the governor of Judea; he therefore had a right to ask questions concerning political affairs. You remember how definitely and positively Jesus had answered the question of Pilate when he asked him if he were a king. Equally emphatic now is the silence of Jesus. Evidently Pilate is now out of patience with what to him must have seemed the unreasonable ob-

stinacy of the man, for as Jesus continues to be silent he says to him:

"Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power (authority—R. V. Margin) to crucify thee, and have power (authority) to release thee?"

It is the utterance of the man of the world, of any man of the world in authority, to one beneath him. He has now appealed to Jesus to say something which shall clarify the situation in the mind of Pilate. Jesus answers this last appeal:

"Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivereth me unto thee hath the greater sin."

This is as wonderful a reply as that which Jesus had given to the high priest[1] and evidently Pilate understood it. At any rate, it appears that Pilate was affected by the solemnity of the answer and, as the record states, "from thenceforth he sought to release him." Clearly the conviction came to him more strongly than ever that he must save the life of Jesus.

"But the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar."

The Jews recognized that here was a critical situation; that their charges were really being set aside by

[1] Matt. xxvi. 64; Mark xiv. 62.

Pilate, and that if they were not wily and shrewd they would fail in their plan to have Jesus put to death. So they flung this taunt at Pilate, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend"; in other words, "If you release this man, you are no longer loyal to Cæsar." And they added, "Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." This was the charge against Jesus. Already Pilate's political power was beginning to wane. Already complaints had gone up to Rome about his methods with the Jews, and Pilate knew this. And so at this critical time these people were crafty enough to use the very weapon which would reach a man like Pilate. It was perfectly clear that Pilate wanted to release Jesus, but their accusation struck at a tender spot with him. He owed his authority to Cæsar, and here is a chance for a charge against him, if he sets free a possible usurper who has already declared himself king. Apparently this was the turning-point with Pilate. So when Pilate heard these words of the Jews he brought Jesus forth, and he sat down in the judgment seat in a place called the Pavement. This was a spot, probably in the open air, paved with stones, enclosed and elevated, where the judge sat in his chair of state,—called the "judgment seat or tribunal,"—regarded as the official seat of the Roman judge.

It is supposed to have been at this point that Pilate

received the message from his wife telling of her dream concerning Jesus, and warning him to have nothing to do with his death. The superstitious feeling caused by this incident probably added to the force of Pilate's conviction that Jesus should be released. But the critical point with Pilate had evidently passed and he could not now retract.

When again Pilate asked which of the two he should release unto them and they cried as before, "Barabbas," he said unto them, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" They all cried out, "Let him be crucified."[1] Then Pilate protesting against such an extreme penalty said unto them, "Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go."[2] But they with loud voices clamored for crucifixion. And as recorded by Luke, "The voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required."

To return to the record as given by John we read that, "It was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour," meaning the sixth hour from sunrise, and Pilate said unto the Jews, "Behold your King!" This was uttered in the spirit of mockery, and recognizing it as such the people cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him." To which

[1] Matt. xxvii. 22.

[2] Luke xxiii. 22.

Pilate answers, still in the spirit of mockery, "Shall I crucify your King?" The mob was mad; raised even to a higher pitch of excitement than it had been before. And the chief priests answered, "We have no king but Cæsar," thus strangely seeming to renounce their nationality, to forswear their political freedom, declaring their allegiance to Rome. Then Pilate delivered Jesus unto them to be crucified.

"And they took Jesus, and led him away.
"And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull,[1] which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:
"Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst."

John does not enter into the scenes of suffering as much as the other narrators do. He mercifully passes over the incidents immediately preceding the crucifixion turning to a discussion in which the Jews again become involved with Pilate.

"And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."

This was another taunt for the proud Jews of Jerusalem, for Nazareth was a despised place, and the men

[1] In relation to the term, "place of a skull," two explanations have been offered, one, that it was so called because the place abounded in skulls; the other, because the knoll of ground in shape resembled a skull.

of Nazareth were looked down upon as a lowly, uneducated, country people. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" was a saying which we read of in the early part of Jesus' career. And here Pilate says the King of the Jews is a Nazarene!

"Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

"Pilate answered, What I have written I have written."

Pilate could not stand firm when an innocent man's life was at stake, but he could be determined over a trivial nothing, and this is quite in keeping with the weakness of his character. "Thus Pilate appears a typical specimen of a worldly man. The good in him was unsupported by moral principle, and overborne by personal and political considerations. Compelled to take the leading part in a transaction where high moral qualities were supremely demanded, he proved himself to be without them, and made a great crime possible by his feebleness of character."[1] Pilate soon after disappears from history, at least authentic history. It is said that overcome by remorse he committed suicide.

"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every sol-

[1] Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

dier a part; and also his coat (or tunic): now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

"They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did."

"That the scripture might be fulfilled." As the record stands here it would seem as though this were done for the purpose of fulfilling the scriptures. But this is a form of expression frequently found in the Gospels and sometimes in other parts of the New Testament. In my opinion the soldiers did not do this in order to fulfill the scriptures, but in doing this the scriptures merely *were* fulfilled. This of course does not mean that the soldiers were *intentionally* fulfilling a prophecy. But it is evident that *John,* the narrator of this Gospel, believed that when the soldiers thus acted they did so "that the scriptures might be fulfilled," that is, John believed that they were thus unconscious instrumentalities in carrying out the prophecy of the Old Testament. It is noticeable how John softens the scene by his turning away from the agony of the cross to this little incident. He sees in it a fulfillment of prophecy. And then he adds another touch, a beautiful one:

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

"When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

"Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy Mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

In this man, bearing more than man ever bore before, even the sins and errors of the world, the heart of him, even in this hour of great agony, is still throbbing for others, is still alive to the needs of others; and yet when he was arrested all fled and left him. Even Peter, the man who had been spokesman for the twelve, the man who had been so prompt to recognize the greatness of Jesus, and who, more than any other, had declared that never would he desert him, even Peter had deserted him utterly. And now,—he who had declared greater truths than any other man had before declared, who had even claimed greater things for himself and the whole world than any other had claimed,—now at the end, when everything human is slipping away from him, when taunts of all sorts are being flung at him by the jeering soldiers and the mocking Jews, now in this direst moment he remembers his mother and the beloved disciple. It is the greatest example we have of entire self-forgetfulness

in the hour of extreme trial and great suffering. And again, as at the marriage at Cana, Jesus does not call her "Mother" but "Woman." According to our modern thought this has sounded to many almost disrespectful; but the title "woman" among the Jews, as before stated, was a title signifying not only honor and respect, but loyalty, fidelity, and devotion. And also in a certain sense, though we of this age may miss it, was probably a higher title and one of greater affection than the one of "mother," even a title recognizing in a way the divinity of womanhood.

According to the records that we have, the words of Jesus spoken from the cross are very few. No words of those recorded by John are mentioned in the other Gospels, nor are those given in the others recorded by John. In Luke we have the memorable prayer of forgiveness when Jesus said of those who had just crucified him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"; and then his consoling words to one of the malefactors that were crucified with him, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke also records that as Jesus died he said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

The only words recorded by Matthew and Mark as spoken by Jesus during his suffering on the cross are not mentioned in the other two Gospels. These words are the same in both Matthew and Mark. We read

that " from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." At the end of that time, presumably after the light was dawning again, " Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" This is frequently spoken of as the " cry of despair from the cross," and followers of Jesus throughout the world have been perplexed over this cry, have been disturbed by these words.

There is a peculiarity about this statement wherein it differs from any of the other seven utterances from the cross. Each of the others is reported by only one of the Gospels; while Matthew and Mark unite on this one and it is reported by both in practically the same words. And then again, differing from most of the other utterances of Jesus, this is given us in two languages, in the common language of the country, and in the classical Greek, which was the language of the scholars in those days. And these two coincide, so we have here a double reason for supposing that this exclamation is fairly well reported.

Now is it possible to believe that he who passed through all the trials and tribulations, all the persecutions and discouragements of the three preceding years, did at the last imagine that the Father had deserted him? His first utterance from the cross is a prayer for forgiveness of his enemies; his last is like in char-

acter impressing us with its entire faith and trust, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Now between these two statements can we possibly insert this so-called wail of despair? In the whole career of Jesus he kept to the one direct course of unity with God and of perfect and complete faith in Him. He was always the loyal Son of the Father, and always loyal to the truth that he taught.

We all recognize the weakness of the flesh, and we know from things Jesus said and did, from his trials and tribulations, that even with him the flesh was weak at times, and the very most I would intimate would be merely a momentary spasm which passed as soon as it came. But there is another explanation which seems to me quite plausible and satisfying.

With the Jews the first education of the child, and the only one considered of prime importance, was education in their sacred books. Thus the education of the child was distinctly religious, and they began by teaching it to repeat passages of their scripture. The Jews were also a musical people, and with them music was a religious affair, finding its greatest significance in the temple. The sacred hymn was the avenue for religious expression among all Jews. And so, in that early time, the religious hymn served an extremely important purpose, both as a means of instruction and as a sustainer of religious ideas. And we have to-day the

old hymn-book that was used in those times. We call it the "Book of Psalms." These were the hymns of the people, and it was an important part of the instruction of every boy and girl that they should learn these hymns verbatim. Thus it is more than probable that the boy Jesus, brought up in a pious family, should, in his early childhood, have been required to commit to memory the hymns that were familiar to every Jewish child.

And so here is one of them, the one that with us is numbered twenty-two. It begins with the same words which were heard from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" It is distinctly a hymn of prayer in which the difficulties and the trials of the earthly life are recounted, but with rejoicing and praise at its close. It seems to be,—we might almost say in literal language as well as figurative,—a description of the very scenes that were then being enacted around Jesus. For instance, in the sixteenth and eighteenth verses we read: "They pierced my hands and my feet"; "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." And then comes this pæan of praise: "Praise Him; . . . glorify Him! . . . For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from him; but when he cried unto Him, He heard." How much of being forsaken is there in this? "My praise

shall be of Thee in the great congregation. . . . They shall praise the Lord that seek Him; your heart shall live forever." And then here, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee." The despair is turned into rejoicing; the misfortune into the great triumph of success, "For the kingdom is the Lord's; He is the governor among the nations."

Now let us suppose that the thought of Jesus when he said, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" was the recollection of this old hymn, and that his repetition of these words was for the purpose of calling to the minds of the Israelites the triumphs and the success, which even in their early writings they had predicted, for the man who was now suffering before them, not in despair, but with rejoicing, not in the sense of loneliness, but with the sure sense of protection, preservation, and the final glory in the saving of the world. By repeating merely the first line of this hymn, he might call to their attention the prediction of the glorious triumph which was to follow. Or, might it not even bring comfort to himself thus to repeat a psalm of his childhood's teaching, in this his hour of great distress? Not that he was alone and forsaken, but that God the Father was with him there on the cross, even as He had been with him throughout

his earthly life, and would continue to be with him forever and forever. This interpretation seems far more consistent with the life and teaching of Jesus the Christ, and thus interpreted these words, instead of being a wail of despair, are but the beginning of a pæan of praise to God.

To continue, as recorded by John:

"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished (are now finished—R. V.), saith, I thirst.

"Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth."

The word here translated "vinegar" is the name of a common kind of wine that the soldiers were ordinarily provided with on such occasions as this, and which was for their own use. It was the cheap wine of the country. And the soldier, about to refresh himself with the wine, filled the sponge and took a small rod,—the Greek reads "a hyssop stalk,"—and reached up and put it to Jesus' mouth. Amid all their jeers and taunts there was yet somewhat of sympathy there, for the soldier gave of his own to the relief of Jesus.

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

The original Greek and some translations read,

"gave up the spirit"; the Revised Version renders it, "gave up his spirit." It was finished, that is, the human manifestation of Jesus was ended, and the spirit released.

So far as those who watched could understand, the end of this most marvelous attempt which Jesus had made was utter failure. Never had there been a greater beginning, and never, apparently, had there been a more complete failure. And yet, invisible to human eyes, invisible to any merely human thoughts, were the seeds of the spirit of truth which had been sown, and which were to spring up into a life which should never go out but which should go on and on eternally, until the branches of that tree should cover the whole earth and all the nations of the world should rest in its shade.

It was the preparation day of the Jews, that is, it was the day before their Sabbath. Therefore all work must be done before sundown to be ready for the proper observance of the Sabbath. The Jews were very strict in their observance of this day, and they did not want the bodies to remain upon the cross; indeed, according to Jewish ideas and customs, it would have been a great offense to have left the bodies there over the Sabbath. Thus they wanted the matter settled and everything done at once, and so they asked Pilate for permission to take the bodies away.

"Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

"But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

"But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." [1]

In the Encyclopædia Biblica we read: "We have reason to believe that a lance wound was sometimes given to those who were crucified to accelerate death." And this also might have been the reason as some believe for the breaking of the legs. At least we prefer this more humane interpretation than to think of it as a most cruel form of punishment which, according to history, was sometimes practised among the Romans. Those who were crucified usually lived for hours and sometimes for days, but it is believed that Jesus died unusually soon.

"And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

"And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

"Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it

[1] Not mentioned in Mark and Luke and omitted from Matthew except for a marginal note in the Revised Version which reads: "Many ancient authorities add, And another took a spear and pierced his side, and there came out water and blood."

in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner (or custom) of the Jews is to bury (literally,—*to prepare for burial*).

"Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

"There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand."

Thus seemingly ended a career such as the world had not before witnessed! A great light literally gone out in the blackness of darkness! In fact the other Gospels tell us that there was indeed darkness over the land for three hours. The earthly mission of Jesus was at an end. He had taken the cup that the Father gave him to drink; he had walked the road that the Father would have him walk. Yet it was not God's will that he should suffer, but that he should *do the right;* that he should not only teach the truth, but that he should live the truth. And he did live it. Not one wrong action did he commit. Not one of those precepts which he has given us for our guidance did he violate. And history shows us that during all these last hard hours not once did he offer resistance. He was indeed the light of the world, a light which ultimately shall so enlighten mankind, that every human being shall manifest the truth as Jesus manifested it, until the whole world will be illuminated with an in-

finite glory and beauty now beyond our farthest conception.

It was for this that Jesus gave himself. It was in order that all this might come about, that error might drop from the world, that man might forget all wrong, all suffering and all sin, and might live in the truth. For this great goal did Jesus live and die; and he triumphed over death that we might *know* that *life is eternal.*

XXXIV

THE RESURRECTION
(John XX.)

JESUS was laid in the tomb during the last part of Friday, very near but probably not quite at sunset, because Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, and with them the day began at sunset of the previous evening. Sunday was reckoned as the first day of the week. Their reason for wishing the three bodies taken from the cross so soon was that they might not be exposed there on the Sabbath day, and more especially that there might not be an occasion for labor on that day. The Jewish interpretation of the law with regard to the keeping of the Sabbath was very strict. So it is quite certain that the removal of the body of Jesus from the cross and the placing of it in the tomb occurred before the sun had set on Friday evening.

"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre."

The popular idea is that the body of Jesus lay in the tomb for three days but it was probably a shorter time

than that, that is, a part of Friday, all of Saturday, and a small part of early Sunday. Accounts differ as to how early Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre. Some make it apparently just as the sun was rising. She came there naturally expecting to find the sepulchre in the same condition as when left on Friday night; but she sees that the stone has been taken away from the sepulchre. Mary Magdalene was probably not looking for anything unusual. The body had been laid there that Friday night with at least the ordinary care common in that country. It had been too late to prepare the body for the grave then, so it was to be done this Sunday morning. This record does not state whether Mary looked into the sepulchre or not. It merely implies that she did, for the story continues:

"Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

"Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

"So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

"And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

"Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

"And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying

with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

"Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed."

The body was gone, the grave-clothes were there, and they had been carefully taken care of. Much stress has been laid by many upon the condition in which these garments of death were found; for they were wrapped together in an orderly manner, the napkin that had been about the head lying folded by itself. It was evident there had been no haste. If grave-robbers had removed the body, they would not have been at the trouble of putting things in order. If some enemies of Jesus, opposed to his teachings, had taken away the body, the strong probability is that they would have taken the body just as it was, not waiting to put things in order or to change the garments, but instead, everything would have been left in confusion. So we have to conclude that had the removal been done with any kind of haste or violence, these things would not have been found in this orderly condition. This fact alone, though a minor one, is strong circumstantial evidence of the marvelous thing that had happened.

But this comrade of Peter, that "other disciple," universally accepted as John by all critics, "saw and believed." Believed what? There was on the part of the disciples, all the time they were with Jesus, a

strange failure to comprehend many things which to us now seem quite clear. The writer of this Gospel attempts an explanation merely by saying, "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." Yet Jesus in talking with his disciples frequently spoke of his approaching death, invariably adding that he would soon after rise again from the dead. He himself certainly understood that he must die and rise again; indeed he had several times said that he was to rise from the dead the third day,[1] and yet they had not understood.

It is frequently so with the human mind; we grasp one thing and miss another, and so often by giving our attention to minor things we miss those more important and essential. All that Thursday in the upper room after the Last Supper, Jesus had talked with his disciples about many things and particularly about his going away and his coming again; yet somehow they did not seem to grasp his real meaning. We remember that it was only at the very end of this conversation that they accepted his statements and told him that they understood what he was telling them; for when Jesus said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father," his disciples said unto him, "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now

[1] Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 23; xx. 18, 19; and elsewhere.

are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God." Yet even then it seems they did not entirely understand him.

But John "*saw and believed.*" So far as we know, this is the record of the first man in all the world to believe in the resurrection. Peter it appears was the first to enter the sepulchre. John hesitated although he outran Peter and was the first one there; but Peter, as often happened, rushed in impetuously where others hesitated. Yet it was John who saw and believed.

"Then the disciples went away again unto their own home."

That is, as we understand it, they went to their abiding-place wherever that might be, perhaps to John's house for he had a home in that vicinity, perhaps to some temporary stopping-place. It was perfectly natural that Peter and John should be together, and it is quite probable that a little group of the disciples, the eleven who were left and possibly others, including the women who had accompanied them, had gathered at John's home. We may presume this, although we do not know, but I like to let the imagination follow them there. I like to imagine what were their thoughts, their feelings; and I fancy they were like sheep without a shepherd, uncertain, mourning,

and more than that, despairing. And now comes this amazing event upon them, apparently wholly unexpected, in spite of the fact that Jesus had plainly told them what would happen.

So they, having made sure that the body was not there, went away to determine what to do next. Doubtless that had been the question with them all these hours since the crucifixion, *what to do next.* This man, Jesus, who as they had thought, was to be the ruler of the Jews, and lead the nation out of bondage, very much to their astonishment had died even as malefactors die. He was not reigning as a king. And now comes this second great surprise in the disappearance of the body of Jesus. It is little wonder they were bewildered.

It seems that Mary accompanied the two disciples when they went to the sepulchre. But she did not go with them when they went away. She was evidently overcome by her feelings, as the record goes on to say:

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

"And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain."

No doubt Mary had all the tenderness of ordinary humanity for the place where the dead friend is laid,

and she could not tear herself away from the spot. The two men had looked in and seen nothing. They had merely recognized the situation, noting the vacant place, seeing the grave-clothes lying there; this apparently satisfied them that Jesus was not there and they went away. But Mary did not go, and as she stood weeping she looked in the sepulchre and saw the two angels sitting in the place where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said unto her:

"Woman, why weepest thou?"

From the human point of view it was a time for weeping, but in reality, that is, from the point of view of the truth, it was a time for gladness and rejoicing. And it was indeed a time for gladness and rejoicing, because here was in progress a demonstration of the continuance of life after death, such as the world had never before seen. But to the angels of God it was surprising that she should not understand and should weep. Yet who of us would have understood?

"She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

And that is the wail of humanity to-day. We say to ourselves and to each other as Mary said to the angels, "They have taken away my master; they have taken away my friend; they have taken away my beloved,

and *I know not where he is!*" That is why we weep at the tomb. That is why we weep when we encounter what we call death. And that is why Mary wept. But Jesus had said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Comfort and joy unspeakable certainly follow mourning. For the taking away is only temporary under any circumstances; is merely the step towards a union such as we do not now dream of. And this resurrection which was taking place in Mary's very presence, but which she did not understand, is a type and symbol of every resurrection; because after the semblance and appearance of death, comes the realization of life eternal.

It seems strange that Mary did not continue the conversation. Probably at the time she saw them as men, rather than as angels; so that the recognition of them as angels was perhaps an afterthought. They asked her a question; she answered it and then turned away, overcome all the time by her grief. And is it not often so with ourselves on similar occasions, that our grief closes our consciousness to important truths of which we might otherwise be aware?

The accounts given in the other Gospels are somewhat different from this of John's, for in those Mary is not the only woman present and also considerably more is recorded as being said by the angels. Matthew and Mark mention only one angel, the words spoken

by the angel being practically the same in these two reports: "Fear ye not; I know ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Go and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." Luke, like John, mentions two angels who said unto the women, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." To continue in John, after Mary's reply to the angel, we read:

"And when she had thus said, she turned herself back (or turned around), and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus."

Mary was seeking the body, and was looking in the grave for it but she had to turn away from the grave to find the spiritual reality, to find Jesus. She knew he was not there in the grave, yet she continued to look, as we do also. And she stands as a type of us all, looking for the reality, looking for the spirit, where it is not. But when she turned squarely about, away from the grave, she saw Jesus; yet knew not that it was Jesus. And Jesus asks of her the same question that the angel had asked:

"Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

The object for which she first came to the sepulchre was still in her mind: care for the dead body. Her thought had gone no farther than that. And we are, many of us, much like Mary, losing the spiritual vision by turning our thoughts too much to the earthly duties, the material things. Yet these things of the earth are not to be neglected, and Jesus himself taught the lesson of absolute faithfulness in the place where we find ourselves.

And Jesus answers her in one word, "Mary." Then she turns and says unto him, "Rabboni; which is to say, Master." She questions no more; at last she understands. What a revelation it must have been to her! We need no suggestions as to what Mary thought and felt after this one word from Jesus; her recognition and her one feeling word of response are all that is needed.

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

This is the first message that we have from beyond the grave; the first message that comes to us from out the great unknown. And these first words that the risen Christ speaks to us and to the whole world, are fraught with deepest meaning, wondrous in all that

they suggest. He says, "Go to my brethren." He, the Master, the teacher and leader, but just *now* risen from the grave, and his first word is,—to those who had deserted him in the hour of his greatest trial,—"*My brethren*"; and in thus saluting them he salutes all mankind. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father." One Father who is Father alike to all! The Father of the Christ and of all mankind! And this Father, Jesus says, is "my God and your God." These words do not require explanation; they are so simple and plain in their meaning that every reader can interpret them and apply them to himself. There are no more impressive words in the Gospels, nor any which hold a deeper meaning concerning Jesus and his mission on earth. We might almost say that it is all summed up in just these few words: "I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." This is enough to redeem the whole world, enough to change the thoughts, the beliefs of the entire race, if only it could but once enter into the full significance of this resurrection scene; if it could but apprehend the fullness of meaning in this the first message of the risen Christ.

Perhaps a few words had better be said in relation to the first part of this message, where Jesus says to Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto

the Father" (R. V.). The Greek word here translated "touch" means essentially, "to take hold of, to cling to"; thus "touch me not" would mean "hold me not." In the Revised Version, Margin, it is rendered, "Take not hold on me." The construction of the Greek has the force of "Do not *keep* hold of me." It would be the most natural thing under the circumstances that Mary should fling herself on the ground at the feet of Jesus and reach out to grasp him. And this may have been what Jesus meant here: "Hold me not, or keep me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father; that is, I have not yet fully entered the spiritual manifestation." The fact that the transition from the material to the spiritual manifestation might not at this moment have been fully complete also may explain why Mary did not at first know Jesus. A little later we see how Jesus could at will command both the material and the spiritual manifestation, for according to the records, he appeared in the midst of the disciples though the doors were closed, yet almost immediately he could show them the proofs they seemed to require, in the print of the nails in his hands, and the mark of the wound in his side. It would appear that he became visible to Mary at very nearly the moment of his resurrection, when the power of transition from one manifestation to another was not quite complete, as seems evidenced by his words to her,

"Touch me not," for later on he said to his disciples, "Handle me, and see that it is I myself."

Therefore in obedience to the words of Jesus, Mary "came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her." Both Mark and Luke report that the disciples did not believe her story. Mark says, "And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not." It was too great a thing for them to accept; too far beyond the ordinary occurrences with which they were familiar, and they could not believe it. And yet Jesus had told them he was going to rise again. But now John's narrative changes to another scene:

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

The disciples had not believed Mary when she told them that she had seen Jesus and talked with him; but now suddenly, there he stood in their midst. As recorded by Luke, "They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." And this fear is not to be wondered at, when we realize what

marvelous things these were that were happening to them.

Thus the first words of Jesus to his assembled disciples were, "Peace be unto you." This was a common salutation of the country between friends, but doubtless Jesus used these words in part to reassure them because of their fears. Among his last words to them at the Supper had been, "My peace I give unto you"; and now after they had fled from him in his distress, he seeks them out and greets them, not with reproaches for their conduct, but with great loving-kindness, "*Peace be unto you.*" Then he proceeds immediately to identify himself:

"And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

Luke relates the story of this interview more at length. Jesus had walked with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus and had talked with them and they did not know him; but when he broke bread with them at their evening meal they recognized him. "And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight"; or more literally, "He became invisible." That same hour they returned to Jerusalem and told the eleven and those with them, that the Lord had indeed risen, and they related to

them the story of their walk with him and how they had known him at the breaking of bread. Then as they thus talked, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, "Peace be unto you." But Luke says they were afraid, supposing they had seen a ghost, and Jesus said unto them, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts (*doubts* in one translation) arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

Notice that Jesus did not say that he *had* flesh and bones but that *they saw him* as having flesh and bones, that is, to their *material vision* he seemed possessed of flesh and bones. Then he asked them to take hold of him, saying, "See my hands and my feet. See that it is I myself." In other words, "Take the kind of proof which will be proof to you that I am indeed the one who hung on the cross three days ago. This will prove my identity to your material vision, your mortal sense; and I do this for you that you may know that death is not the end, but that life is eternal."

They were at last convinced that it was indeed the Jesus whom they had known, who had hung dying on the cross but three days before, and who had been pronounced dead and laid in the tomb. They were amazed as they now saw him with all the appearances of flesh and blood and yet he had entered that room

without opening the door. He was simply there among them; that was all they could say. And Luke continues saying, "And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? (anything to eat—R. V.). And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them."

How was this? Doors were no barrier; they were shut and had not been opened, yet there he was, and so thoroughly did Jesus appear to them as in the flesh that he ate of the fish and the honeycomb. The answer to this question is quite simple. Always we have only to go to the words of Jesus for the explanation of all that he said or did. He had said sometime before that he could lay down his life and could take it up again. In the parable of the Good Shepherd we read: "I lay down my *life,* (from Greek word *psyche*) that I might (*may*—R. V.) take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Jesus here was referring to the material life; while in contrast to this in this same parable, in verses ten and twenty-eight,[1] he uses the word *life,* (from Greek word *zoe*) in referring to the eternal life. As before stated, Jesus used the word *zoe,* or eternal life, in connection with the spiritual being, the real man; and he used the

[1] John x.

word *psyche,* or material life, in connection with the external man, the physical appearance. This peculiarity is found throughout his use of these two words but most unfortunately the distinction is lost in the translation.

Thus Jesus had taken up his material life there in the tomb. Whatever it had been before, it was now to him but a thing to be taken up or laid down as he chose. He now had complete control of all that which we call the external, the physical or material, the human being, called in the Greek the *psyche.* When Jesus manifested the spiritual life it would appear that he was either invisible to the disciples or else they did not know him as on the walk to Emmaus. And so it would appear that Jesus as a spiritual being crossed the threshold of that room where the doors were shut, and took up the manifestation of the human in such a way that they saw him as a material person as they had seen him before the crucifixion. In order to demonstrate to them, that is, to their poor, clinging sense of materiality, that it was indeed he himself, he showed them his hands and his feet and ate before them as a human being. John does not narrate the particulars with the minuteness that Luke does, but indicates the same thing when he says, "He showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

"As *the* Father hath sent me, even so send I you." The article "the" is used in the Revised Version. Jesus does not make any claim in this important declaration, that God is *his* Father exclusively, but he makes the statement most general. God is *the* Father, just as he bids us pray, "*Our* Father which art in heaven"; and note again what he says so emphatically in verse seventeen, "My Father and *your* Father, and my God and *your* God." Similarly while he sent the eleven, there is nothing to indicate that it was they only. The probability is that there were many others there with them. Luke speaks of a similar gathering of the disciples as numbering "about an hundred and twenty."[1] Thus the disciples of Jesus are those who believe in him. And in sending out his disciples, he sends, in the same way that the Father sent him, all those who believe in the truth. He sends every believer as he himself was sent. There is no necessity of any organization whatsover; no need of authority of any school, or sect, or church. Recognition of the truth is the first qualification and the next is love; the kind of love that Jesus prayed for when he asked "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them." And

[1] Acts i. 15.

thus most richly will the words of Jesus be fulfilled, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, He will give it you"; and, "He that believeth, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do."

"And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: (*Holy Spirit*—R. V. Margin).

"Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

The Greek word here translated "remit" is the same word that is translated "forgive" in the Lord's Prayer; and the word "forgive" means "to release, to give up, to send away," literally, "to put out of mind." The rendering of this passage according to the Revised Version is, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

We take the word "forgive" on our lips every time we repeat the Lord's Prayer, when we ask God to forgive us as *we* forgive others. Yet how often we fail to render to others the forgiveness we crave for ourselves! So here is another declaration along the same line; if *we* ourselves forgive, then all is forgiven. And here too, is the reverse of the declaration; if we fail to forgive others their sins, then our own shall be

retained or unforgiven. If we retain even the memory of their sins then our own sins are retained likewise. Therefore "whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," if not unto the sinner, they are unto ourselves; for the splinter in thy brother's eye is a beam in thine own. And great as was Jesus' demonstration over material appearances, yet greater still will be the demonstration of what we may do if we will, as he himself declared when he said, "These things shall ye do and greater than these." There is also another thought in connection with this passage, for there is here in these words relating to forgiveness, a marvelous suggestion of that spiritual oneness, linking together all of God's children, which Jesus so earnestly prayed for in the seventeenth chapter of this Gospel.

A proper interpretation and application of the science of psychology will show that in these simple words is a suggestion of a power that is inherent in every human being, the principle of which is as unvarying as the law of gravitation. I turn my hand over and let go the book I am holding; it falls to the floor. The same principle may be applied here. If you turn your mind over, that is, if you completely change your thinking so that you put out of mind,—let go from it,—the knowledge of your brother's mistake, the thought or memory of his error, then and only then do you forgive entirely. If you completely free your mind

of that thought which you are holding against your brother, then is he fully forgiven, for you then have no thoughts of condemnation left with which to judge him; in other words, you have dropped them from your mind as you drop the book to the floor. This duty rests with you and with me, with every one. And this is the secret of forgiveness.

"The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." Jesus uttered these words at the time he healed the man sick of the palsy. "*The Son of man hath power to forgive.*" And this power to forgive and to do good to others was not given to the immediate disciples alone; the power is a general one and is for all who have faith in it, and who choose to forgive and to do good. We are each one of us a "Son of man," a child of God, even as Jesus was. He told us to approach God and to say to Him, "*Our* Father which art in heaven." And so according to Jesus' own words if we will but realize it, we do have power on earth to put away sin and all its consequences, at least from ourselves; and we have the power to help others to do likewise. And it was for this work that Jesus sent out his disciples.

"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

"The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I

shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Thomas was a good, hard-headed, straightforward, and honest man, seeing and recognizing materiality and the things of materiality; thus he did not propose to be fooled. He was looking for proofs. We have many such men in these days, and they are apt to pride themselves on their superiority; but there is another side of existence which such as these do not see.

"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

"Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.[1]

"And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The resurrection proving the reality of life after death perhaps has done more than all else to perpetuate the teaching of Jesus. Yet these incidents, relating

[1] A closer reading of the Greek is: "Be thou not unbelieving, but believing."

to the resurrection and the belief in immortality, which are of such vast importance, have been more severely questioned and doubted than any other incidents in the whole career of Jesus. They are, however, the corner-stone of Paul's teaching, and they have been the corner-stone of all Christian teaching ever since. But he who reads the story of Jesus' words and acts with understanding, perceiving the divine truth therein contained, must recognize that the resurrection, wonderful as it was and is, is not more wonderful than the whole course of his life and teaching; and not only that, but must recognize that the resurrection is but the natural, normal, the certain and sure outcome of that life and teaching.

XXXV

THE MEETING AT THE LAKE
(John XXI.)

We now come to the closing chapter of the Book of John. It is distinct from any other chapter in this Gospel and would seem to have been added afterwards. Although it deals with minor matters when compared with the preceding chapters, it yet contains much that is of value. It begins:

"After these things Jesus showed (manifested—R. V.) himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias (Galilee); and on this wise showed (manifested) he himself.

"There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

"Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee."

Let us try to imagine the situation of the disciples at this time. These men had been following Jesus for three years, learning of him and doing substantially what he told them to do. Now their teacher was removed from them. They had seen him twice under very peculiar circumstances yet such as to satisfy them with regard to his identity. They no doubt expected

to see him again, and yet they felt there was some uncertainty about it and in their perplexity they did not know what to do. So Peter said that he would "go a fishing"; and his companions replied, "We also go with thee." Fishing was Peter's business before he met Jesus; in fact he was engaged in that occupation on the occasion of his first meeting with Jesus. The record goes on to say that after this decision:

"They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

"But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus."

The fact of their not recognizing him may have either of two explanations. It may have been very early in the morning while the light was yet too dim to see clearly who it was standing on the shore. On the other hand, you remember that Jesus was not recognized by the two disciples when he walked with them on their way to the village of Emmaus; in fact they did not know him until the solemn act of the breaking of bread by him. And it might have been the same on this occasion.

"Then Jesus saith unto them, Children,[1] have ye any meat? They answered him, No."

[1] A term of affection and familiarity; used here much as we might say, "Boys, have you caught anything?"

"Have ye aught to eat?" is the rendering of the Revised Version. The word here translated "meat" is also translated "food," and it means "anything eaten with bread as a relish." It would seem that the expression was here used in the sense of, Have you caught anything? And they had not. They had toiled all night and had caught nothing. And Jesus said unto them:

"Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

"Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,)[1] and did cast himself into the sea."

In his eagerness to approach Jesus, Peter cast himself into the sea. Impetuous always was Peter, and it is well that we know something of his impetuosity because it has helped us to understand him. Peter was also a great questioner, and many of the things which he asked of Jesus and the replies which Jesus gave, have enlightened us in these days, as much, perhaps, if not more, than they enlightened Peter at that time. You remember it was Peter who drew from Jesus his

[1] The word translated "fisher's coat" means "upper garment." Thus the declaration means simply that he did not have on his outer garment.

great rule for prayer: "Have the faith of God"; and, "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." A marvelous rule indeed; true, fundamental, and scientific. And if Peter had done nothing else than just to draw forth this great declaration, we should be deeply grateful to him.

"And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,)[1] dragging the net with fishes.

"As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish (*a* fish—R. V. Margin) laid thereon, and bread."

They had caught nothing all that night, so had not been able to provide food for their breakfast. But here it was ready for them; the fire of coals and the food: fish and bread. What a beautiful lesson in service this incident offers us! Jesus the Christ, who had passed through the crucifixion and the tomb, and who had risen again; who knew more of God's truth, was closer and more intimate with the spiritual nature, than any other man, was here providing a meal for his disciples. And in this act of service, providing food for hungry men, we see a parallel of that other service rendered by him, when he washed the feet of his disciples, telling them that as he served them so

[1] A little more than one hundred yards.

should they serve one another. And so here Jesus provided for the common necessities of his disciples; he performed the work of a servant, and later at this meal he completed his act of service by waiting on them. To me the picture is deeply significant, is replete with glory and majesty. And Jesus says unto them:

"Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

"Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

"Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.[1] And none of the disciples durst (or ventured) ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

"Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

"This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself (was manifested—R. V.) to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead."

It was in reality the fourth time that Jesus had appeared since his crucifixion; first to Mary at the tomb, and twice afterwards to the disciples, so that this was the third time that he had shown himself to his disciples, according to the records that we have.

"So when they had dined, (broken their fast—R. V.) Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of

[1] "Come and break your fast." Revised Version (that is, "Come and breakfast").

Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (Tend my sheep—R. V.)

"He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.[1] Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

This was the second time that Peter was called to the discipleship; first at the end of that other night of fishing, and again at the end of this one. To some there may seem to be here an allusion to Peter's denial of Jesus. Thrice Peter had made his denial. Thrice Jesus now asks Peter if he loves him, and thrice he says that he does. And again three times he is told to care for the lambs and the sheep.

What did Jesus mean when he asked, "Lovest thou me more *than these?*" Did he mean, "Do you love me more than you love these disciples," or, "more than they love me"? In either instance it would seem a most embarrassing question to all concerned. There

[1] "*Love*" in these places represents two different Greek words. In the first two questions the word "love" means to love with reverence. In Peter's replies and also in the last question a different word is used in the Greek, which means rather, to love dearly, as friends.

is, however, another interpretation. The Greek here is ambiguous. Some believe that "*these*" refers to the fish. Peter had apparently gone back to his old occupation. Jesus says, "Do you love me and my work more than you love these?" "Are you willing to give this up for me?" This seems more characteristic of Jesus, reminding us of the occasion when he said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Peter had been the one who first proposed this fishing excursion. Whether or not he proposed to give up his work, to leave the feeding or tending of Jesus' flock to others, or whether this was merely but a temporary return to his original occupation, we do not know. But from Jesus' words here, it would seem that he at least recognized a doubt in Peter's mind as to his intention to be faithful to the work which Jesus had committed to him and to the other disciples. And so whether or not there was any intended reference to Peter's denial of Jesus, it was entirely appropriate that these words should be addressed to Peter, to show him what he at least was to do. And if he, then the others, as well as every other one who has recognized the truth that Jesus taught; because when Jesus said, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you," he included in his declaration all disciples. And he did not necessarily mean that any should leave their present occupation, but that they should discharge that occu-

pation in the light of and by the way of the truth. I take it that we are not to leave that duty which has been entrusted to us until it has been fulfilled. We are sometimes, every one of us, entangled in conditions which through ignorance we have brought upon ourselves; we thus have duties to perform which we need not have had, had we known and understood.

We have here in this chapter, an exemplification of that precept of Jesus, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God," as well as that other one, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Seek to *be right* and to *do right* and the rest follows without seeking even, and there will be an abundance always. But there should be no neglect of any opportunity, no lack of faithfulness in any occupation, for whatever a man's occupation may be, he is to be faithful in it, always remembering that Jesus taught that whoever seeks to do God's will "shall know of the doctrine or teaching"; that is, *he shall understand the truth,* and so will always know the correct course to pursue.

In the parable of the "unjust steward" so-called,—though I prefer the designation, "steward of injustice,"—Jesus emphasizes the thought of faithfulness; faithfulness even in the least of things, for he said in that parable, "He that is faithful in that which is

least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." [1] In the Revised Version this passage is rendered somewhat differently, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much." We are to be faithful in the place where we find ourselves, even though after our recognition of the truth it may not be just the place we would have chosen had we been wiser. Once we have undertaken a task we ought not shirk it, though we may afterwards discover that we should not have accepted it. If we have made a mistake through ignorance, we should make good that mistake as far as is possible, though of course always *doing the right,* whatever the place or condition may be. Thus shall we oftentimes uplift not only ourselves and those about us, but the very surroundings themselves.

When Jesus had for the third time said to Peter, "Feed my sheep," he continued saying:

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, (literally *younger*) thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." [2]

[1] Luke xvi. 10.

[2] Historians suggest that this is probably a reference to the coming crucifixion of Peter who it is said was crucified a short time before the destruction of Jerusalem.

And the narrator interprets these words thus:

"This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

"Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following;

"Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?"

Peter instead of thinking of his own work was looking after that of others; was questioning as to what others should do instead of thinking of what he himself should do in answer to Jesus' words to him, "*Follow me.*" And that is human nature, over and over again.

"Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Jesus was here talking just to Peter, but in the broad sense this may be applied to ourselves and to all others. "What is that to thee? Follow *thou* me." And so what others may do, or may not do, is not for us to question, but each is to see that he himself follows the Master in the way of truth. We should nevertheless assist others in every way that we can, as Jesus had in mind when he told Peter to feed his sheep. But in the last analysis each must himself follow the Christ, must follow the truth, in his own individual way.

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